SELECT POEMS

OF

ROBERT BROWNING.

EDITED, WITH NOTES,

BY

WILLIAM J. ROLFE, A.M.,

AND

HELOISE E. HERSEY.

NEW YORK:

HARPER & BROTHERS, PUBLISHER

FRANKLIN SQU

1886.

PREFACE.

THE publishers have desired that this book should be included in the series of "English Classics" edited by me, and that my name should be put first on the title-page; but I may say here in the preface that the better part—in every sense—of the work has been done by Miss Hersey, who knows tenfold more about Browning than I do. She originated the plan, selected the poems, prepared the Introduction, and wrote more than half of the notes. I have carefully collated the earlier and later texts of the poems (see especially the various readings of *The Lost Leader*, *Childe Roland*, and *Pippa Passes*, none of which appear in their later form in the American editions), and have revised and filled out the Notes.

We have worked together in putting the results of our individual labors in shape for the press; and we venture to hope that the book is the better for having two editors instead of one. We are more confident of the excellence of choice and arrangement in the text than of the wisdom and completeness of the annotations. In the latter, however, we trust that at least we have not merited the scathing reminder of Browning's own lines in *Master Hugues of Saxe-Gotha:*

> "So we o'ershroud stars and roses,
> Cherub and trophy and garland;
> Nothings grow something which quietly closes
> Heaven's earnest eye: not a glimpse of the far land
> Gets through our comments and glozes."

W. J. R.

CAMBRIDGE, *July* 28, 1886.

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INTRODUCTION

TO

SELECT POEMS OF ROBERT BROWNING.

GENERALIZATIONS about so varied a poet as Robert Browning are as misleading as they are easy. It has become the fashion for each critic to speak of him with a series of more or less suitable epithets. He is obscure, dramatic, Christian, modern, introspective, and so forth. But, in truth, neither his friends nor his enemies are in position to know altogether or even almost what he is. A few years of honest study and honest reflection will not be too much to give to a poet who makes, tacitly at least, such claims as Robert Browning.

The present volume aims at being the first step in such quiet, unassuming work. We need little general analysis of Browning. The real aim of this little book is simply to put students into the way of pursuing successfully a study of his poetry. Never was author for whom it is more disastrous that his readers should begin at the wrong end. This volume hopes to present an untangled skein to its student.

For this purpose are needed: (*a*) the chief facts of the poet's life; (*b*) a chronological table of his longer works; (*c*) a few citations from the best criticisms of him; (*d*) a brief list of the reviews or other articles worth consulting; (*e*) careful notes, explanatory of historical, local, or otherwise obscure allusions in the selections.

I. THE LIFE AND WORKS OF BROWNING.

Robert Browning was born at Camberwell, London, in 1812. His father was a clerk in the Bank of England. When Robert was eight years old he made a metrical translation from Horace. He studied at London University. At twenty he published his first poem, *Pauline;* and at twenty-three, *Paracelsus.* From that time his production has been steady and large. In 1846 he married Elizabeth Barrett. In 1849 a son was born to him. In 1861 Mrs. Browning died. The years from 1851 to 1861 were a time of less productive activity than any others of his life, but were perhaps the most important in his intellectual and emotional development.

His first poem, *Pauline*, scarcely commanded the attention even of the professional critics—usually alert to find even a novel failure; but the value of *Paracelsus* was recognized by many critics. The drama of *Strafford*, which followed, must be confessed a failure upon the stage, though Macready did his best for its success. After *Sordello*—a hopeless poem for a public unaccustomed to Browning's manner,—came a most extraordinary series known as *Bells and Pomegranates.* The very name seems to have been inexplicable to most readers. It was simply a conceit borrowed from the decoration upon the robe of the Jewish high-priest.* Mr. Browning explained it at the end of the series † in this fashion: "I meant by the title to indicate an endeavour towards something like an alternation, or mixture, of music with discoursing, sound with sense, poetry with thought, which looks too ambitious thus expressed, so the symbol was preferred."

* "And beneath upon the hem of it thou shalt make pomegranates of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, round about the hem thereof; and bells of gold between them round about; a golden bell and a pomegranate, upon the hem of the robe round about."—*Exodus*, xxviii. 33, 34.

† Preface to 1st edition of *A Soul's Tragedy.*

These poems were issued in shilling numbers, at irregular intervals, and with yellow-paper covers. Paper and type were as unattractive as possible. The pages were printed in double columns. Little effort was made to interest even the small audience which such poems could hope to gain. But in spite of this indifference the poems made their way. The series included all the *Dramas*, the *Dramatic Lyrics* and *Romances*, and *The Bishop Orders His Tomb at St. Praxed's.* It will be seen that the material for the present selection is largely drawn from *Bells and Pomegranates.*

In 1850 were published *Christmas Eve and Easter Day*, and in the next ten years the two volumes of short poems—*Men and Women* and *Dramatis Personæ.* During these years a distinct change took place in the character of Mr. Browning's work. He forsook the dramatic form. He wrote brief, pointed poems of incident, of character, of emotion, instead of the long philosophical meditations of the early period. The picturesque aspects of life seem to have laid hold on him. *Youth and Art*, *Rabbi Ben Ezra*, "*Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came*," represent this period in the present selection. It is not presumptuous to say that Mrs. Browning's influence is evident in all the work of the decade, and that the comparative silence of the last part of it was due to the eternal silence gathering about the woman the poet loved.

With 1868 began the third and last epoch in Browning's work. *The Ring and the Book* was in a new vein,—the richest that he had yet worked. This is no place for an abstract or a criticism of this great epic. It was closely followed by a dozen poems in the same external style. They are a phil osophical presentation of a dramatic *motif; The Inn Album*, *Red Cotton Night-Cap Country*, *Fifine at the Fair* are like what we should expect if a master took the musical situations of a great Wagnerian opera and put them into the symphonic form.

II. CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF BROWNING'S CHIEF WORKS.

1833, Pauline.
1835, Paracelsus.
1837, Strafford.
1840, Sordello.
1841, Pippa Passes.
1842, King Victor and King Charles.
" Dramatic Lyrics.
1843, The Return of the Druses.
" A Blot in the Scutcheon.
1844, Colombe's Birthday.
1845, The Tomb at St. Praxed's.
" The Flight of the Duchess.
" Dramatic Romances.
" Luria.
" A Soul's Tragedy.

1850, Christmas Eve and Easter Day.
1855, Men and Women.
1864, Dramatis Personæ.

1868–9, The Ring and the Book.
1871, Hervé Riel.
" Balaustion's Adventure.
" Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau.
1872, Fifine at the Fair.
1873, Red Cotton Night-Cap Country.
1875, Aristophanes' Apology.
" The Inn Album.
1876, Pacchiarotto.
1877, Agamemnon.
1878, La Saisiaz.
" The Two Poets of Croisic.
1879, Dramatic Idylls (I.).

1880, Dramatic Idylls (II.).
1883, Jocoseria.
1885, Ferishtah's Fancies.

III. HELPS TO THE STUDY OF BROWNING.

The most important works for consultation are, of course, the publications of the Browning Society. If not all are obtainable, the Papers for 1881–4, Parts I. and II., are the most essential. The lists and references given in these are really indispensable.

A Handbook to Robert Browning, by Mrs. S. Orr, is a good book in its way. It conveys many valuable facts about the poems. It explains allusions accurately. Mrs. Orr's acquaintance with Mr. Browning gives her a certain reliability in such matters. But as an interpreter of the poet she is "still far out." In matters of opinion or even of appreciation there could be no guide less safe.

Studies in Literature, by Edward Dowden, and *Victorian Poets*, by E. C. Stedman, have excellent chapters on Browning.

Literary Studies, by Walter Bagehot, has an article comparing Browning and Tennyson.

The following are the most valuable reviews in periodicals, in addition to those from which our Introduction quotes. All of the latter, except, perhaps, M. Milsand's, will repay a complete reading.

The Church Quarterly Review, Oct. 1878 (Hon. and Rev. Arthur Lyttleton).

The London Quarterly Review, July, 1869.

The Contemporary Review, Jan. and Feb. 1867.

The Victoria Magazine, Feb. 1864 (Moncure D. Conway).

Finally, the student should not fail to read carefully Browning's own *Essay on Shelley*. It was prefixed to a volume of Letters supposed to be by Shelley, but which afterwards proved to be spurious. The essay is none the less valuable,

and has been reprinted by the Browning Society in the Papers for 1881–4, Part I. p. 3 fol. It defines exactly Browning's poetic ideals, and gives us generously his own standard by which to measure him.

IV. CRITICAL COMMENTS ON BROWNING.

[*From the Introductory Address to the Browning Society, by Rev. J. Kirkman, M.A., October* 28, 1881.*]

Browning is undoubtedly the profoundest intellect, with widest range of sympathies, and with universal knowledge of men and things, that has arisen as a poet since Shakespeare. In knowledge of many things he is necessarily superior to Shakespeare, as being the all-receptive child of the century of science and travel. In carefulness of construction, and especially in the genius of constructing *drama*, he claims no comparison with Shakespeare. But his truly Shakespearian genius pre-eminently shines in his power to throw his whole intellect and sympathies into the most diverse individualities; to think and feel as one of them would, although undoubtedly glorified by Browning's genius within. . . . I said that his profound acquaintance with men and things was Shakespearian. I should have emphatically said with men, *women*, and things. Browning's women are as wonderful a class almost as Shakespeare's. He understands women with perfecter intuition and less uniform rose-color than Richter, of whom Browning often reminds us. . . .

I must claim for Browning the distinction of being pre-eminently the greatest Christian poet we have ever had. Not in a narrow and dogmatic sense, but as the teacher who is thrilled through with all Christian sympathies as with artistic or musical. . . . I hold very light that solicitude to know and tabulate what his own system of truth is. I can not sympathize with the intrusive deduction as to what Browning himself is. . . . How can you get at Shakespeare,

* *Browning Society Papers*, Part II. (London, 1882).

who is as truly Falstaff as he is King Lear; Iago as much as Othello? He is humanity. So is Browning religion; with all forms of art, philosophy, and experience as her ministers.

[*From Richard Grant White's Introduction to "Selections from Browning."**]

/ A poet real and strong is always phenomenal, but Browning is the intellectual phenomenon of the last half-century, even if he is not the poetical aloe of modern English literature. His like we have never seen before. He is not what he is by mere excelling. No writer that ever wrought out his fretted fancies in English verse is the model of him, either in large, or in one trait or trick of style. Of the poets of the day we can easily see, for example, that William Morris is a modern Chaucer; that Tennyson has kindred with all the great English verse-makers, and is the ideal maker of correct, high-class English poetry of the Victorian era, having about him something of the regularity and formality and conventional properness of an unexceptionable model—a beauty like that of a drawing-master's head of a young woman, but informed and molded by the expression of noble thoughts; that pagan Swinburne is Greek in feeling and Gothic in form, and so forth; but we can not thus compass or classify Browning. Were his breadth and his blaze very much less than they are, we should still be obliged to look at him as we look at a new comet, and set ourselves to considering whence he came and whither he is going amid the immensities and the eternities. . . / In purpose and in style Browning was at the very first the Browning he has been these twenty years. He has matured in thought, grown richer in experience, and obtained by practice a greater mastery over his materials, without, however, as I think, using them of late in so pleasing or even so impressive a manner as of old; but otherwise he is now as a poet, and it would seem as a man, much the

* New York, 1883.

same Robert Browning whose first writings were received with little praise and much scoffing, and were pronounced harsh, uncouth, affected, and obscure.

[*From a Review of "The Ring and the Book," by John Morley.**]

We have this long while been so debilitated by pastorals, by graceful presentation of the Arthurian legend for drawing-rooms, by idyls, not robust and Theocritean, but such little pictures as might adorn a ladies' school, by verse directly didactic, that a rude inburst of air from the outside welter of human realities is apt to spread a shock which might show in what simpleton's paradise we have been living. The little ethics of the rectory-parlor set to sweet music, the respectable aspirations of the sentimental curate married to exquisite verse, the everlasting glorification of domestic sentiment in blameless princes and others, as if that were the poet's single province and the divinely appointed end of all art, as if domestic sentiment included and summed up the whole throng of passions, emotions, strife, and desire; all this would seem to be turning us into flat valetudinarians. Our public is beginning to measure the right and possible in art by the superficial probabilities of life and manners within a ten-mile radius of Charing Cross. Is it likely, asks the critic, that Duke Silva would have done this, that Fedalma would have done that? Who shall suppose it possible that Caponsacchi acted thus, that Count Guido was possessed by devils so? The poser is triumphant, because the critic is tacitly appealing to the normal standard of probabilities at Bayswater or Clapham; as a man who, having never thought of anything mightier or more turbulent than the village brook or horse-

* *Fortnightly Review*, March, 1869. This powerful review by Mr. Morley is based upon *The Ring and the Book*, but the general introduction characterizes so well Browning's work as a whole, that I insert it here. It might be applied almost *verbatim* to *Men and Women* or to *Pippa Passes*.

pond, would most effectively disparage all stories of wreck and storm on the great main. . . . [Here] we are taken far from the serene and homely region in which some of our teachers would fain have it that the whole moral universe can be snugly pent up. We see the black passions of men at their blackest; hate, so fierce, undiluted, implacable, passionate, as to be hard of conception by our simpler Northern natures; cruelty so vindictive, subtle, persistent, deadly, as to fill us with a pain almost too great for true art to produce. [But] from what at first was sheer murk, there comes out a long procession of human figures, infinitely various in form and thought, in character and act; a group of men and women, eager, passionate, indifferent; tender and ravenous, mean and noble, humorous and profound, jovial with prosperity, or half-dumb with misery, skirting the central tragedy, or plunged deep into the thick of it, passers-by who put themselves off with a glance at the surface of a thing, and another or two who dive to the heart of it. And they all come out with a certain Shakespearian fulness, vividness, directness. Above all, they are every one of them frankly men and women, with free play of human life in limb and feature, as in an antique sculpture. So much of modern art, in poetry as in painting, runs to mere drapery. "I grant," says Lessing, "that there is also a beauty in drapery, but can it be compared with that of the human form? And shall he who can attain the greater, rest content with the less? I much fear that the most perfect master in drapery shows by that very talent wherein his weakness lies." This was spoken of plastic art, but it has a yet deeper meaning in poetic criticism. There, too, the master is he who presents the natural shape, the curves, the thews of men, and does not labor and seek praise for faithful reproduction of the mere moral drapery of the hour, this or another; who gives you Hercules at strife with Antaeus, Laocoön writhing in the coils of the divine serpents, the wrestle with circumstance or passion, with out-

ward destiny or inner character, in the free outlines of nature and reality, and not in the outlines of a dress-coat either of Victorian or Arthurian time. The capacity which it has for this presentation, at once so varied and so direct, is one reason why the dramatic form ranks as the highest expression and measure of the creative power of the poet; and the extraordinary grasp with which Mr. Browning has availed himself of this double capacity, is one reason why we should reckon *The Ring and the Book* as his masterpiece.

[*From Ruskin's "Modern Painters."* *]

Robert Browning is unerring in every sentence he writes of the Middle Ages; always vital, right, and profound; so that in the matter of art . . . there is hardly a principle connected with the mediæval temper that he has not struck upon in those seemingly careless and too rugged rhymes of his. There is a curious instance, by the way, in a short poem referring to this very subject of tomb and image sculpture; and illustrating just one of those phases of local human character which, though belonging to Shakespeare's own age, he never noticed, because it was specially Italian and un-English. . . . I mean the kind of admiration with which a Southern artist regarded the *stone* he worked in; and the pride which populace or priest took in the possession of precious mountain substance, worked into the pavements of their cathedrals and the shafts of their tombs. Observe, Shakespeare, in the midst of architecture and tombs of wood, or freestone, or brass, naturally thinks of *gold* as the best enriching and ennobling substance for them; in the midst, also, of the fever of the Renaissance, he writes, as every one else did, in praise of precisely the most vicious master of that school—Giulio Romano; but the modern poet, living in Italy, and quit of the Renaissance influence, is able fully to enter into the

* *Modern Painters*, by John Ruskin (American ed., New York, 1860), vol. iv. p. 359 fol.

Italian feeling, and to see the evil of the Renaissance tendency, not because he is greater than Shakespeare, but because he is in another element, and has *seen* other things. . . .

I know no other piece of modern English prose or poetry, in which there is so much told, as in these lines [*The Bishop Orders His Tomb at St. Praxed's Church*] of the Renaissance spirit,—its worldliness, inconsistency, pride, hypocrisy, ignorance of itself, love of art, of luxury, and of good Latin. It is nearly all I said of the central Renaissance in thirty pages of *The Stones of Venice* put into as many lines, Browning's being also the antecedent work. The worst of it is that this kind of concentrated writing needs so much *solution* before the reader can fairly get the good of it, that people's patience fails them, and they give up the thing as insoluble; though, truly, it ought to be to the current of common thought like Saladin's talisman, dipped in clear water, not soluble altogether, but making the element medicinal.

[*From James Russell Lowell's Essay on Browning's Plays and Poems.**]

Browning's Dramas are not made up of a number of beauties, distinct and isolate as pearls, threaded upon the string of the plot. Each has a permeating life and spirit of its own. When we would break off any fragment, we cannot find one which would by itself approach completeness. It is like tearing away a limb from a living body. For these are works of art in the truest sense. They are not aggregations of dissonant beauties, like some modern sculptures, against which the Apollo might bring an action of trover for an arm, and the Antinoüs for a leg, but pure statues, in which everything superfluous has been sternly chiselled away, and whose won-

* *North American Review*, April, 1848, p. 374. This extract and the following are specially noticeable on account of their date. At least two critics recognized Browning's importance as early as 1848 and 1851.

derful balance might seem tameness to the ordinary observer, who demands *strain* as an evidence of strength. The characters in them are not bundles of different characteristics, but their gradual development runs through the whole drama, and makes the life of it. We do not learn what they are by what they say of themselves, or by what is said of them, so much as by what they do or leave undone. Nor does any drama seem to be written for the display of some one character which the author has conceived and makes a favorite of. No undue emphasis is laid upon any. Each fills his part, and each, in his higher or lower grade, his greater or less prominence, is equally necessary to the rest. Above all, his personages are not mere mouthpieces for the author's idiosyncrasies. . . . His men and women *are* men and women, and not Mr. Browning masquerading in different-colored dominoes. We implied as much when we said he was an artist. For the artist-period begins precisely at the point where the pleasure of expressing self ends, and the poet becomes sensible that his highest duty is to give voice to the myriad forms of nature, which, wanting voice, were dumb. The term *art* includes many lower faculties of the poet; but this appears to us its highest and most comprehensive definition. Hence Shakespeare, the truest of artists, is also nothing more than a voice. . . .

If we could be sure that our readers would read Mr. Browning's poems with the respect and attentive study they deserve, what should hinder us from saying that we think him a great poet? However, as the world feels uncomfortably somewhere, it can hardly tell how or why, at hearing people called great, before it can claim a share in their greatness by erecting to them a monument with a monk-Latin inscription on it which nine tenths of their countrymen cannot construe, and as Mr. Browning must be as yet comparatively a young man [1848], we will content ourselves with saying that he has in him the elements of greatness. To us he appears to

have a wider range and greater freedom of movement than any other of the younger English poets.

[*From J. Milsand's "La Poésie Anglaise depuis Byron."* *]

What Mr. Browning has produced is great as it stands, but he suggests a power even greater than his achievement. He speaks like a spirit who is able to do that which has been almost impossible in past centuries. The dawning soul of man in antiquity (and I suspect that this is symbolized in Aprile, one of the characters in *Paracelsus*) saw objects isolated, as forms and as visions; to it, the confused and mingled sounds which nature brings to man, expressed nothing more than the mere physical effect of their action upon the ear; it was limited to distinguishing mere disjoined syllables of nature's language. Above every other, Mr. Browning's poetry is that of a new human species, which can now distinguish words and construe phrases. He has the sort of insight whose peculiar characteristic it is to recognize everywhere, not only forms and facts, but their mutual connections and methods of action. This philosophical power which he possesses of seizing subtle and exact relations is met with in more than one thinker, it is true; but he is one of the first, if not the first, in whom it has reached such development, without becoming the dominant faculty which subordinates all the others. For, strong as it is, it has found in his poetic imagination another faculty still stronger, which has forced it to work as its purveyor and servant. In this lies the essential originality of Mr. Browning.

[*From "How the Browning Society Came into Being," by F. J. Furnivall.*†]

But Browning [in his later poems] has evidently made up his mind that we shall eat our mutton without currant jelly,

* *Revue des Deux Mondes*, vol. xi. (1851), p. 661.

† *Browning Society Papers*, Part II., London, 1882.

our hard biscuits without Narbonne honey. He has not deigned in his later works to use the slighter tools of Fancy and the like, of which he showed himself a master in his earlier ones. With intense earnestness he has gone straight to his facts, his reasonings, his dealings with men's souls, the meaning of evil, the being of God, and has refused to dally with triflings on the road. He has also taken up some more repulsively diseased cases of corrupted souls than he did in earlier life. But they are only such as he finds here on earth, with which the God he believes in deals; and he thinks that the poet whose business is to strive to see things as God sees them, may lawfully set these crimes before his fellow-men, not for their *enjoyment*, but for their spirits' gain. If his clerical readers complain of the change, let the lay ones at least be content with it, even if they don't praise it. What they lose in Fancy and Beauty, they gain in Subtlety, Power, Penetration, and Depth.

[*From Dowden's "Studies in Literature."* *]

As we started with the assumption that Mr. Tennyson has a vivid feeling of the dignity and potency of *law*, let us assume, for the present, that Mr. Browning vividly feels the importance, the greatness and beauty of passions and enthusiasms, and that his imagination is comparatively unimpressed by the presence of law and its operations. . . . It is not the order and regularity in the processes of the natural world which chiefly delight Mr. Browning's imagination, but the streaming forth of power and will and love from the whole face of the visible universe. . . .

But Mr. Browning's most characteristic feeling for nature appears in his rendering of those aspects of sky or earth or sea, of sunset, or noonday, or dawn, which seem to acquire some sudden and passionate significance; which seem to be

* *Studies in Literature*, by Edward Dowden, LL.D. (2d ed., London, 1882), p. 211 fol.

charged with some spiritual secret eager for disclosure; in his rendering of those moments which betray the passion at the heart of things, which thrill and tingle with prophetic fire. When lightning searches for the guilty lovers, Ottima and Sebald [*Pippa Passes*], like an angelic sword plunged into the gloom, when the tender twilight, with its one chrysolite star, grows aware, and the light and shade make up a spell, and the forests by their mystery and sound and silence mingle together two human lives forever, when the apparition of the moon-rainbow appears gloriously after the storm, and Christ is in his heaven, when to David the stars shoot out the pain of pent knowledge and in the gray of the hills at morning there dwells a gathered intensity—then Nature rises from her sweet ways of use and wont and shows herself the Priestess, the Pythoness, the Divinity which she is. Or rather, through Nature, the Spirit of God addresses itself to the spirit of man.

If Mr. Tennyson's thinking had any tendency in the direction vaguely named pantheistic, it would be towards identifying God with the order and wisdom of the universe; if Mr. Browning's thinking had such a tendency, it would be towards identifying him with the passion, so to speak, of nature. In the joy of spring-time God awakens to intenser life:

> "The lark
> Soars up and up, shivering for very joy;
> Afar the ocean sleeps; white fishing gulls
> Flit where the strand is purple with its tribe
> Of nested limpets; savage creatures seek
> Their loves in wood and plain—and God renews
> His ancient rapture!"

A law of nature means nothing to Mr. Browning if it does not mean the immanence of power and will and love.

Mr. Browning, like Mr. Tennyson, is an optimist, but the idea of a progress of mankind enters into his poems in a comparatively slight degree. . . . He thinks much less of

the future of the human race and of a terrestrial golden age than of the life and destiny of the individual, and of the heaven that each man may attain; and it is in his teaching with reference to the growth of the individual and its appropriate means that we find the most characteristic part of Mr. Browning's way of thought. . . . It seems to him that the greatness and glory of man lie not in submission to law, but in aspiration to something higher than ourselves; not in self-repression, but in the passion which scorns the limits of time and space, and in the bright endeavors towards results that are unattainable on earth.

Man here on earth, according to the central and controlling thought of Mr. Browning, man here in a state of preparation for other lives, and surrounded by wondrous spiritual influences, is too great for the sphere that contains him, while, at the same time, he can exist only by submitting for the present to the conditions it imposes; never without fatal loss becoming content with submission, or regarding his present state as perfect or final. Our nature here is unfinished, imperfect, but its glory, its peculiarity, that which makes us men—not God, and not brutes—lies precisely in this character of imperfection, giving scope as it does for indefinite growth and progress—

> "Progress, man's distinctive mark alone,
> Not God's, and not the beasts'; God is, they are,
> Man partly is, and wholly hopes to be."

And it is by a succession of failures, stimulating higher aspirations and endeavours, that we may reach at last

> "the ultimate angels' law,
> Indulging every instinct of the soul,
> There where law, life, joy, impulse, are one thing." . . . *

A man may be guilty of either of two irretrievable errors: seduced by temptations of sense, denying the light that is in him, yielding to prudential motives, or to supineness of

* *A Death in the Desert*, p. 129.

heart or brain or hand, he may renounce his spiritual, his infinite life and its concerns. That is one error. Or he may try to force those concerns and corresponding states of thought and feeling and endeavor into this finite life—the life which is but the starting-point and not the goal. He may deny his higher nature, which is ever yearning upward to God through all noble forms of thought, emotion, and action; he may weary of failure which (as generating a higher tendency) is his peculiar glory; or else he may deny the conditions of finite existence, and attempt to realize in this life what must be the achievement of eternity.

Hence it is not obedience, it is not submission to the law of duty, which points out to us our true path of life, but rather infinite desire and endless aspiration. Mr. Browning's ideal of manhood in this world always recognizes the fact that it is the ideal of a creature who never can be perfected on earth, a creature whom other and higher lives await in an endless hereafter. . . . Man must not rest content with earth and the gifts of earth; he must not aim at "thrusting in time eternity's concern;" but he must perpetually grasp at things attainable by his highest striving, and, having attained them, find that they are unsatisfying, so that by an endless series of aspirations and endeavors, which generate new aspirations and new endeavors, he may be sent on to God, and his manifested love, and his eternal heaven. . . .

These ideas lead us to the central point from which we can perceive the peculiarity and origin of Mr. Browning's feeling with regard to external nature, art, religion, love, beauty, knowledge. . . .

Is it of external nature that Mr. Browning speaks? The preciousness of all the glory of sky and earth lies in its being the manifested power and love of God, to which the heart springs as fire. . . . [But] nature has betrayed and ruined us if we rest in it; betrayed and ruined us, unless it send us onward unsatisfied to God.

And what are Mr. Browning's chief doctrines on the subject of Art? . . . The true glory of art is that in its creation there arise desires and aspirations never to be satisfied on earth, but generating new desires and new aspirations, by which the spirit of man mounts to God himself. The artist (Mr. Browning loves to insist on this point) who can realize in marble or in color or in music his ideal has thereby missed the highest gain of art. In *Pippa Passes* the regeneration of the young sculptor's work turns on his finding that in the very perfection which he had attained lies ultimate failure. And one entire poem, *Andrea del Sarto*, has been devoted to the exposition of this thought.

> "A man's reach should exceed his grasp,
> Or what 's a heaven for?" . . .

A large number of Mr. Browning's poems have love for their theme; and here again we find the same recurring thoughts. . . . The *dramatis personæ* of many of Mr. Browning's poems fall into two groups—the group of those whose souls are saved by love, and the group of those whose souls are lost by some worldliness, or cowardice, or faintness of heart. The old French academician, too prudent or self-restrained to yield to the manifold promptings of nature and utter his love, has ruined four lives, which for that sin have been condemned to be henceforth respectable and passionless [*Dîs Aliter Visum*]. . . . So again in *Youth and Art* the same lesson is enforced. Boy-sculptor and girl-singer afterwards to be each successful in the world, the one to be wife of "a rich old lord," the other to be "dubbed knight and an R. A.," are too prudent to yield to the summons of love. And therefore in the deepest sense each has failed:

> "Each life 's unfulfilled you see;
> It hangs still patchy and scrappy;
> We have not sighed deep, laughed free,
> Starved, feasted, despaired, been happy." . . .

Over against the group of these lost souls who have abjured or forfeited love stands the group of those whom love has purified and saved, pure, it may be, with a radiant spotlessness, or, it may be, soiled and stained with griefs and shames and sins, but yet redeemed by love. . . .

With Mr. Browning the moments are most glorious in which the obscure tendency of many years has been revealed by the lightning of sudden passion, or in which a resolution that changes the current of life has been taken in reliance upon that insight which vivid emotion bestows; and those periods of our history are charged most fully with moral purpose which take their direction from moments such as these. We cannot always burn with the ecstasy, we cannot always retain the vision. Our own languors and lethargy spread a mist over the soul, or the world with its prudential motives and sage provisos, and chicane of counsels of moderation, tempts us to distrust the voice of every transcendent passion. But even in the hour of faithlessness, if we can cling blindly to the facts revealed in the vanished moment of inspiration we shall be saved.

"Oh, we're sunk enough here, God knows!
But not quite so sunk that moments
Sure though seldom are denied us,
When the spirit's true endowments
Stand out plainly from its false ones,
And apprise it if pursuing
Or the right way or the wrong way,
To its triumph or undoing.

"There are flashes struck from midnights,
There are fire-flames noondays kindle,
Whereby piled-up honors perish,
Whereby swollen ambitions dwindle,
While just this or that poor impulse,
Which for once had play unstifled,
Seems the sole work of a lifetime
That away the rest have trifled."

[*From Swinburne's Essay on George Chapman's Works.**]

The charge of obscurity is perhaps of all charges the likeliest to impair the fame or to imperil the success of a rising or an established poet. It is as often misapplied by hasty or ignorant criticism as any other on the roll of accusations, and was never misapplied more persistently and perversely than to an eminent writer of our own time. The difficulty found by many in certain of Mr. Browning's works arises from a quality the very reverse of that which produces obscurity, properly so called. Obscurity is the natural product of turbid forces and confused ideas; of a feeble and clouded or of a vigorous but unfixed and chaotic intellect . . . Now if there is any great quality more perceptible than another in Mr. Browning's intellect it is his decisive and incisive faculty of thought, his sureness and intensity of perception, his rapid and trenchant resolution of aim. To charge him with obscurity is about as accurate as to call Lynceus purblind or complain of the sluggish action of the telegraphic wire. He is something too much the reverse of obscure. . . . He never thinks but at full speed; and the rate of his thought is to that of another man's, as the speed of a railway to that of a wagon, or the speed of a telegraph to that of a railway. It is hopeless to enjoy the charm or to apprehend the gist of his writings except with a mind thoroughly alert, an attention awake on all points, a spirit open and ready to be kindled by the contact of the writer's. . . . The proper mood in which to study for the first time a book of Mr. Browning's is the freshest, clearest, most active mood of the mind in its brightest and keenest hours of work. . . . The very essence of Mr. Browning's aim and method, as exhibited in the ripest fruits of his intelligence, is such as im-

* *Essay on the Poetical and Dramatic Works of George Chapman.* By Algernon Charles Swinburne. Introduction to *Works of Chapman* (London, 1875).

plies above all other things the possession of a quality the very opposite of obscurity—a faculty of spiritual illumination rapid and intense and subtle as lightning, which brings to bear upon its central object by way of direct and vivid illustration every symbol and every detail on which its light is flashed in passing.

NOTE.—We talk glibly about the canons of art. We have long believed that beauty of form, careful refinement of phrase to thought, logical adaptation of details to each other, clear simplicity of expression, are essential to the immortality of a work of art. The demand for beauty has gone even farther. Certainly one writer * of the past decade has said that in exact proportion as the beauty of form transcends the excellence of matter, will a work gain the admiration of posterity. It seems true that when a great thinker has disregarded conventional canons of expression his work as such has fallen into neglect, and his thought has passed into other hands more skilful to perpetuate it. Now it may as well be confessed at the outset of any study of Browning that he does not observe the methods which have been evolved by the years as most effective for the embodiment of thought. We must grant also that this is a conscious and deliberate act. A man who can command music like that in the *Song* from *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon*, or vigor like that in *Cavalier Tunes*, is not forced to express himself so blindly as in the last ten lines of the *Invocation* from *The Ring and the Book*, or so harshly as in *Red Cotton Night-Cap Country*. He chooses so to express himself. Many of his shorter poems not included in this selection, as, for example, *Popularity*, *Life in a Love*, *Love in a Life*, *Another Way of Love*, etc., are totally unintelligible to the man who reads Shakespeare with delight and Wordsworth with appreciation. But Browning knows English poetry as few of his critics know it. He knows, also, how to make smooth verse which shall tell its story to him who runs. Granting these facts, it is no more than fair that we treat with respect both the poet and his large following, and ask if our notions about art may not need reconstruction. Perhaps we have become both finical and lazy. Perhaps, too, we scarcely realize the novel conditions under which the poet of this century works. The knowledge, the experiences, the complicated emotions, the responsibilities accumulating in the life of the world since the days of Homer, are thrust into his arms. Is it wonder that he staggers under the burden, and that his speech comes haltingly from his lips?

* Dr. John Bascom, in his *Philosophy of English Literature*.

Another fact needs recall. Browning is not the calm high-priest of humanity, as was Shakespeare. He is rather a prophet. He has a new, strange message which he scarcely understands himself. But he must utter it. It may be that it will pass into the life of the world and be absorbed there, rather than find its way into the treasure-house of the world's art. But to this ultimate test at least it answers: *it moves men.* We may parody Browning's style, we may question the novelty of his thought, we may deny his artistic power; but the fact remains that a large number of men and women of his race to-day—many of whom do not belong to the Browning Society—find in him their greatest inspiration to high, divine, and noble thinking.

"And this I know: whether the one true light
Kindle to Love, or Wrath consume me quite,
One flash of It within the Tavern caught
Better than in the Temple lost outright." *

H. E. H.

* *The Rubaiyát*, by Omar Khayyám, stanza 36.

SELECT POEMS OF ROBERT BROWNING.

Or from Browning some 'Pomegranate,' which, if cut deep down the
  middle,
Shows a heart within blood-tinctured, of a veined humanity.

ELIZABETH BARRETT (BROWNING).

I do heartily desire the spread of the study and the influence of Robert Browning; for, having lived some years with Chaucer and Shakspere, to try and know what a Man is, and what a Poet is, I declare my conviction that Browning is the manliest, the strongest, the lifefullest, the deepest, and thoughtfullest living poet, the one most needing earnest study, and the one most worthy of it.—F. J. FURNIVALL.

HERVÉ RIEL.

I.

On the sea and at the Hogue, sixteen hundred ninety-two,
Did the English fight the French—woe to France!
And, the thirty-first of May, helter-skelter thro' the blue,
Like a crowd of frightened porpoises a shoal of sharks pursue,
Came crowding ship on ship to St. Malo on the Rance,
With the English fleet in view.

II.

'T was the squadron that escaped, with the victor in full chase;
First and foremost of the drove, in his great ship, Damfreville:
Close on him fled, great and small,
Twenty-two good ships in all;
And they signalled to the place,
'Help the winners of a race!
Get us guidance, give us harbour, take us quick—or, quicker still,
Here 's the English can and will!'

III.

Then the pilots of the place put out brisk and leapt on board;
'Why, what hope or chance have ships like these to pass?' laughed they:

'Rocks to starboard, rocks to port, all the passage scarred and scored,
Shall the *Formidable* here with her twelve and eighty guns
Think to make the river-mouth by the single narrow way,
Trust to enter where 't is ticklish for a craft of twenty tons,
And with flow at full beside?
Now, 't is slackest ebb of tide.
Reach the mooring? Rather say,
While rock stands or water runs,
Not a ship will leave the bay!'

IV.

Then was called a council straight.
Brief and bitter the debate:
'Here 's the English at our heels; would you have them take in tow
All that 's left us of the fleet, linked together stern and bow,
For a prize to Plymouth Sound?
Better run the ships aground!'
(Ended Damfreville his speech).
Not a minute more to wait!
'Let the Captains all and each
Shove ashore, then blow up, burn the vessels on the beach!
France must undergo her fate.

V.

Give the word!' But no such word
Was ever spoke or heard;
For up stood, for out stepped, for in struck amid all these—
A captain? A lieutenant? A mate—first, second, third?
No such man of mark, and meet
With his betters to compete!
But a simple Breton sailor pressed by Tourville for the fleet,
A poor coasting-pilot he, Hervé Riel the Croisickese.

VI.

And, 'What mockery or malice have we here?' cries Hervé
Riel:
'Are you mad, you Malouins? Are you cowards, fools,
or rogues?
Talk to me of rocks and shoals, me who took the sound-
ings, tell
On my fingers every bank, every shallow, every swell
'Twixt the offing here and Grève, where the river dis-
embogues?
Are you bought by English gold? Is it love the lying 's for?
Morn and eve, night and day,
Have I piloted your bay,
Entered free and anchored fast at the foot of Solidor.
Burn the fleet and ruin France? That were worse than
fifty Hogues!
Sirs, they know I speak the truth! Sirs, believe me
there 's a way!
Only let me lead the line,
Have the biggest ship to steer,
Get this *Formidable* clear,
Make the others follow mine,
And I lead them, most and least, by a passage I know well,
Right to Solidor past Grève,
And there lay them safe and sound;
And if one ship misbehave,
Keel so much as grate the ground,
Why, I 've nothing but my life—here 's my head!' cries
Hervé Riel.

VII.

Not a minute more to wait.
'Steer us in, then, small and great!

Take the helm, lead the line, save the squadron!' cried
its chief.
Captains, give the sailor place!
He is Admiral, in brief.
Still the north-wind, by God's grace!
See the noble fellow's face
As the big ship, with a bound,
Clears the entry like a hound,
Keeps the passage as its inch of way were the wide sea's
profound!
See, safe thro' shoal and rock,
How they follow in a flock,
Not a ship that misbehaves, not a keel that grates the ground,
Not a spar that comes to grief!
The peril, see, is past,
All are harboured to the last,
And just as Hervé Riel hollas 'Anchor!'—sure as fate
Up the English come, too late!

VIII.

So, the storm subsides to calm:
They see the green trees wave
On the heights o'erlooking Grève.
Hearts that bled are stanched with balm.
'Just our rapture to enhance,
Let the English rake the bay,
Gnash their teeth and glare askance
As they cannonade away!
'Neath rampired Solidor pleasant riding on the Rance!'
How hope succeeds despair on each captain's counte-
nance!
Out burst all with one accord,
'This is Paradise for Hell!
Let France, let France's King
Thank the man that did the thing!'

What a shout, and all one word,
 'Hervé Riel!'
As he stepped in front once more,
 Not a symptom of surprise
 In the frank blue Breton eyes,
Just the same man as before.

IX.

Then said Damfreville, 'My friend,
I must speak out at the end,
 Though I find the speaking hard.
Praise is deeper than the lips:
You have saved the King his ships,
 You must name your own reward.
'Faith, our sun was near eclipse!
Demand whate'er you will,
France remains your debtor still.
Ask to heart's content and have! or my name 's not Damfreville.'

X.

Then a beam of fun outbroke
On the bearded mouth that spoke,
As the honest heart laughed through
Those frank eyes of Breton blue:
'Since I needs must say my say,
 Since on board the duty 's done,
 And from Malo Roads to Croisic Point, what is it but a run?—
Since 't is ask and have, I may—
 Since the others go ashore—
Come! A good whole holiday!
 Leave to go and see my wife, whom I call the Belle Aurore!'
 That he asked and that he got—nothing more.

XI.

Name and deed alike are lost:
Not a pillar nor a post
  In his Croisic keeps alive the feat as it befell;
Not a head in white and black
On a single fishing smack,
In memory of the man but for whom had gone to wrack
  All that France saved from the fight whence England bore the bell.
Go to Paris: rank on rank
  Search the heroes flung pell-mell
On the Louvre, face and flank!
  You shall look long enough ere you come to Hervé Riel.
So, for better and for worse,
Hervé Riel, accept my verse!
In my verse, Hervé Riel, do thou once more
Save the squadron, honour France, love thy wife the Belle Aurore!

CLIVE.

I and Clive were friends—and why not? Friends! I think you laugh, my lad.
Clive it was gave England India, while your father gives, egad!
England nothing but the graceless boy who lures him on to speak—
'Well, sir, you and Clive were comrades'—with a tongue thrust in your cheek!
Very true: in my eyes, your eyes, all the world's eyes, Clive was man,
I was, am, and ever shall be—mouse, nay, mouse of all its clan
Sorriest sample, if you take the kitchen's estimate for fame;
While the man Clive—he fought Plassy, spoiled the clever foreign game,
Conquered and annexed and Englished! Never mind! As o'er my punch
(You away) I sit of evenings,—silence, save for biscuit crunch,
Black, unbroken,—thought grows busy, thrids each pathway of old years,
Notes this forthright, that meander, till the long-past life appears
Like an outspread map of country plodded through, each mile and rood,
Once, and well remembered still,—I 'm startled in my solitude

Ever and anon by—what 's the sudden mocking light that breaks
On me as I slap the table till no rummer-glass but shakes
While I ask—aloud, I do believe, God help me!—'Was it thus?
Can it be that so I faltered, stopped when just one step for us'—
(Us,—you were not born, I grant, but surely some day born would be)—
'One bold step had gained a province' (figurative talk, you see),
'Got no end of wealth and honour,—yet I stood stock still no less?'—
'For I was not Clive,' you comment: but it needs no Clive to guess
Wealth were handy, honour ticklish, did no writing on the wall
Warn me 'Trespasser, 'ware man-traps!' Him who braves that notice—call
Hero! -None of such heroics suit myself who read plain words,
Doff my hat, and leap no barrier. Scripture says the land 's the Lord's:
Louts then—what avail the thousand, noisy in a smock-frocked ring,
All agog to have me trespass, clear the fence, be Clive, their king?
Higher warrant must you show me ere I set one foot before
T' other in that dark direction, though I stand forevermore
Poor as Job and meek as Moses. Evermore? No! By and by
[illegible] grows rich and Moses valiant, Clive turns out less wise than I.

Don't object 'Why call him friend, then?' —Power is power, my boy, and still
Marks a man,—God's gift magnific, exercised for good or ill.
You 've your boot now on my hearth-rug, tread what was a tiger's skin:
Rarely such a royal monster as I lodged the bullet in!
True, he murdered half a village, so his own death came to pass;
Still for size and beauty, cunning, courage—ah, the brute he was!
Why, that Clive, that youth, that greenhorn, that quill-driving clerk, in fine,—
He sustained a siege in Arcot— But the world knows! Pass the wine.

Where did I break off at? How bring Clive in? Oh, you mentioned 'fear'!
Just so: and, said I, that minds me of a story you shall hear.

We were friends then, Clive and I; so, when the clouds, about the orb
Late supreme, encroaching slowly, surely, threatened to absorb
Ray by ray its noontide brilliance,—friendship might, with steadier eye
Drawing near, bear what had burned else, now no blaze, all majesty.
Too much bee's-wing floats my figure? -Well, suppose a castle 's new:
None presume to climb its ramparts, none find foothold sure for shoe
'Twixt those squares and squares of granite plating the impervious pile
As his scale-mail's warty iron cuirasses a crocodile.

Reels that castle thunder-smitten, storm-dismantled? From without
Scrambling up by crack and crevice, every cockney prates about
Towers—the heap he kicks now! turrets—just the measure of his cane!
Will that do? Observe, moreover—(same similitude again)—
Such a castle seldom tumbles by sheer stress of cannonade:
'T is when foes are foiled and fighting 's finished that vile rains invade,
Grass o'ergrows, o'ergrows till night-birds congregating find no holes
Fit to build in like the topmost sockets made for banner-poles.
So Clive crumbled slow at London, crashed at last. A week before,
Dining with him,—after trying churchyard-chat of days of yore,—
Both of us stopped, tired as tombstones, head-piece, foot-piece, where they lean
Each to other, drowsed in fog-smoke, o'er a coffined Past between.
As I saw his head sink heavy, guessed the soul's extinguishment
By the glazing eyeball, noticed how the furtive fingers went
Where a drug-box skulked behind the honest liquor,—'One more throw
Try for Clive!' thought I: 'Let 's venture some good rattling question!' So—
'Come, Clive, tell us'—out I blurted—'what to tell in turn, years hence,
When my boy—suppose I have one—asks me on what evidence
maintain my friend of Plassy proved a warrior every whit
Worth your Alexanders, Cæsars, Marlboroughs, and—what said Pitt?—

Frederick the Fierce himself! Clive told me once—I want to say—
Which feat out of all those famous doings bore the bell away—
In his own calm estimation, mark you, not the mob's rough guess—
Which stood foremost as evincing what Clive called courageousness?
Come! what moment of the minute, what speck-centre in the wide
Circle of the action saw your mortal fairly deified?
(Let alone that filthy sleep-stuff, swallow bold this wholesome Port!)
If a friend has leave to question,—when were you most brave, in short?'

Up he arched his brows o' the instant, formidably Clive again.
'When was I most brave? I'd answer, were the instance half as plain
As another instance that's a brain-lodged crystal—curse it!—here
Freezing when my memory touches—ugh!—the time I felt almost fear.
Ugh! I can not say for certain if I showed fear—anyhow,
Fear I felt, and, very likely, shuddered, since I shiver now.'

'Fear,' smiled I. 'Well, that's the rarer: that's a specimen to seek,
Ticket up in one's museum, *Mind-Freaks, Lord Clive's Fear. Unique?*'

Down his brows dropped. On the table painfully he pored as though
Tracing in the stains and streaks there, thoughts encrusted long ago.

When he spoke 't was like a lawyer reading word by word
some will, 89
Some blind jungle of a statement,—beating on and on until
Out there leaps fierce life to fight with.

'This fell in my factor-days.
Desk-drudge, slaving at St. David's, one must game, or drink,
or craze.
I chose gaming; and,—because your high-flown gamesters
hardly take
Umbrage at a factor's elbow if the factor pays his stake,—
I was winked at in a circle where the company was choice,
Captain This and Major That, men high of colour, loud of
voice, 96
Yet indulgent, condescending to the modest juvenile
Who not merely risked but lost his hard-earned guineas with
a smile.
Down I sat to cards, one evening,—had for my antagonist
Somebody whose name 's a secret—you 'll know why—so,
if you list, 100
Call him Cock o' the Walk, my scarlet son of Mars from
head to heel!
Play commenced; and whether Cocky fancied that a clerk
must feel
Quite sufficient honour came of bending over one green
baize,
I the scribe with him the warrior, guessed no penman dared
to raise
Shadow of objection should the honour stay but playing end
More or less abruptly,—whether disinclined he grew to
spend 106
Practice strictly scientific on a booby born to stare
t—not ask of—lace-and-ruffles if the hand they hide plays
fair,—
how, I marked a movement when he bade me "Cut!"

I rose.
"Such the new manœuvre, Captain? I 'm a novice: knowledge grows.
What, you force a card, you cheat, sir?"

Never did a thunder-clap
Cause emotion, startle Thyrsis locked with Chloe in his lap,
As my word and gesture (down I flung my cards to jòin the pack)
Fired the man of arms, whose visage simply red before, turned black.
When he found his voice, he stammered, "That expression once again!"

"Well, you forced a card and cheated!"
"Possibly a factor's brain,
Busied with his all-important balance of accounts, may deem
Weighing words superfluous trouble: *cheat* to clerkly ears may seem
Just the joke for friends to venture; but we are not friends, you see!
When a gentleman is joked with,—if he 's good at repartee,
He rejoins as I do—Sirrah, on your knees, withdraw in full!
Beg my pardon, or be sure a kindly bullet through your skull
Lets in light and teaches manners to what brain it finds! Choose quick—
Have your life snuffed out or, kneeling, pray me trim yon candle-wick!"

"Well, you cheated!"
Then outbroke a howl from all the friends around.
To his feet sprang each in fury, fists were clenched and teeth were ground.

"End it! no time like the present! Captain, yours were our disgrace!
No delay, begin and finish! Stand back, leave the pair a space!
Let civilians be instructed; henceforth simply ply the pen,
Fly the sword! This clerk 's no swordsman! Suit him with a pistol, then!
Even odds! A dozen paces 'twixt the most and least expert
Make a dwarf a giant's equal: nay, the dwarf, if he 's alert,
Likelier hits the broader target!"
Up we stood accordingly.
As they handed me the weapon, such was my soul's thirst to try
Then and there conclusions with this bully, tread on and stamp out
Every spark of his existence, that,—crept close to, curled about
By that toying, tempting, teazing fool-forefinger's middle joint,—
Do n't you guess?—the trigger yielded. Gone my chance! and at the point
Of such prime success moreover: scarce an inch above his head
Went my ball to hit the wainscot. He was living, I was dead.

Up he marched in flaming triumph—'t was his right, mind!—up, within
Just an arm's-length. "Now, my clerkling," chuckled Cocky with a grin
As the levelled piece quite touched me. "Now, Sir Counting-House, repeat
That expression which I told you proved bad manners! Did I cheat?"

"Cheat you did, you knew you cheated, and, this moment, know as well.
As for me, my homely breeding bids you—fire and go to hell!"

Twice the muzzle touched my forehead. Heavy barrel, flurried wrist,
Either spoils a steady lifting. Thrice: then, "Laugh at hell who list,
I can't! God 's no fable, either. Did this boy's eye wink once? No!
There 's no standing him and hell and God all three against me,—so,
I did cheat!"
And down he threw the pistol, out rushed—by the door
Possibly, but, as for knowledge if by chimney, roof, or floor,
He effected disappearance—I 'll engage no glance was sent
That way by a single starer, such a blank astonishment
Swallowed up the senses: as for speaking—mute they stood as mice.

Mute not long, though! Such reaction, such a hubbub in a trice!
"Rogue and rascal! Who 'd have thought it? What 's to be expected next,
When His Majesty's Commission serves a sharper as pretext
For—but where 's the need of wasting time now? Nought requires delay:
Punishment the Service cries for; let disgrace be wiped away
Publicly, in good broad daylight! Resignation? No, indeed!
Drum and fife must play the Rogue's March, rank and file be free to speed

Tardy marching on the rogue's part by appliance in the rear—
Kicks administered shall right this wronged civilian,—never fear,
Mister Clive—for—though a clerk—you bore yourself—suppose we say—
Just as would beseem a soldier!"
"Gentlemen, attention—pray!
First, one word!"
I passed each speaker severally in review.
When I had precise their number, names, and styles, and fully knew
Over whom my supervision thenceforth must extend—why, then,—
"Some five minutes since, my life lay—as you all saw, gentlemen,
At the mercy of your friend there. Not a single voice was raised
In arrest of judgment, not one tongue—before my powder blazed—
Ventured, 'Can it be the youngster blundered, really seemed to mark
Some irregular proceeding? We conjecture in the dark,
Guess at random,—still, for sake of fair play—what if for a freak,
In a fit of absence,—such things have been!—if our friend proved weak—
What 's the phrase?—corrected fortune! Look into the case, at least!'
Who dared interpose between the altar's victim and the priest?
Yet he spared me! You eleven! Whosoever, all or each,
Utters—to the disadvantage of the man who spared me—speech—
... face, behind his back,—that speaker has to do with me;

Me who promise, if positions change and mine the chance should be,
Not to imitate your friend and waive advantage!"

Twenty-five
Years ago this matter happened: and 't is certain,' added Clive,
'Never, to my knowledge, did Sir Cocky have a single breath
Breathed against him; lips were closed throughout his life, or since his death,
For if he be dead or living I can tell no more than you.
All I know is—Cocky had one chance more; how he used it,—grew
Out of such unlucky habits, or relapsed, and back again
Brought the late-ejected devil with a score more in his train,—
That 's for you to judge. Reprieval I procured, at any rate.
Ugh—the memory of that minute's fear makes gooseflesh rise! Why prate
Longer? You 've my story, there 's your instance: fear I did, you see!'

'Well'—I hardly kept from laughing—'if I see it, thanks must be
Wholly to your lordship's candour. Not that—in a common case—
When a bully caught at cheating thrusts a pistol in one's face,
I should underrate, believe me, such a trial to the nerve!
'T is no joke, at one-and-twenty, for a youth to stand nor swerve.
Fear I naturally look for—unless, of all men alive,
I am forced to make exception when I come to Robert Clive,
Since at Arcot, Plassy, elsewhere, he and death—the whole world knows—
Came to somewhat closer quarters.'

Quarters? Had we come to blows,
Clive and I, you had not wondered—up he sprang so, out he rapped
Such a round of oaths—no matter! I'll endeavour to adapt
To our modern usage words he—well, 't was friendly license—flung
At me like so many fire-balls, fast as he could wag his tongue.

'You—a soldier? You—at Plassy? Yours the faculty to nick
Instantaneously occasion when your foe, if lightning quick,
At his mercy, at his malice, has you, through some stupid inch
Undefended in your bulwark? Thus laid open,—not to flinch—
That needs courage you 'll concede me. Then, look here! Suppose the man,
Checking his advance, his weapon still extended, not a span
Distant from my temple,—curse him!—quietly had bade me "There!
Keep your life, calumniator!—worthless life I freely spare:
Mine you freely would have taken—murdered me and my good fame
Both at once—and all the better! Go, and thank your own bad aim
Which permits me to forgive you!" What if, with such words as these,
He had cast away his weapon? How should I have borne me, please?
Nay, I 'll spare you pains and tell you. This, and only this, remained—
Pick his weapon up and use it on myself. I so had gained
Sleep the earlier, leaving England probably to pay on still
Rent and taxes for half India, tenant at the Frenchman's will.'

'Such the turn,' said I, 'the matter takes with you? Then I abate—
No, by not one jot nor tittle,—of your act my estimate.
Fear—I wish I could detect there: courage fronts me, plain enough—
Call it desperation, madness—never mind! for here 's in rough—
Why, had mine been such a trial, fear had overcome disgrace.
True, disgrace were hard to bear; but such rush against God's face—
None of that for me, Lord Plassy, since I go to church at times,
Say the creed my mother taught me! Many years in foreign climes
Rub some marks away—not all, though! We poor sinners reach life's brink,
Overlook what rolls beneath it, recklessly enough, but think
There 's advantage in what 's left us—ground to stand on, time to call
"Lord, have mercy!" ere we topple over—do not leap, that's all!'

Oh, he made no answer, re-absorbed into his cloud. I caught
Something like 'Yes—courage: only fools will call it fear.'
If aught
Comfort you, my great unhappy hero Clive, in that I heard
Next week, how your own hand dealt you doom, and uttered just the word
'Fearfully courageous!'—this, be sure, and nothing else I groaned.
I'm no Clive, nor parson either: Clive's worst deed—we 'll hope condoned.

'HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS FROM GHENT TO AIX.'

[16—.]

I.

I SPRANG to the stirrup, and Joris, and he;
I galloped, Dirck galloped, we galloped all three;
'Good speed!' cried the watch, as the gate-bolts undrew;
'Speed!' echoed the wall to us galloping through;
Behind shut the postern, the lights sank to rest,
And into the midnight we galloped abreast.

II.

Not a word to each other; we kept the great pace
Neck by neck, stride by stride, never changing our place;
I turned in my saddle and made its girths tight,
Then shortened each stirrup, and set the pique right,
Rebuckled the cheek-strap, chained slacker the bit,
Nor galloped less steadily Roland a whit.

III.

'T was moonset at starting; but while we drew near
Lokeren, the cocks crew and twilight dawned clear;
At Boom, a great yellow star came out to see;
At Düffeld, 't was morning as plain as could be;
And from Mecheln church-steeple we heard the half chime,
So Joris broke silence with, 'Yet there is time!'

IV.

At Aerschot, up leaped of a sudden the sun,
And against him the cattle stood black every one,
To stare thro' the mist at us galloping past,
And I saw my stout galloper Roland at last,
With resolute shoulders, each butting away
The haze, as some bluff river headland its spray:

V.

And his low head and crest, just one sharp ear bent back
For my voice, and the other pricked out on his track;
And one eye's black intelligence,—ever that glance
O'er its white edge at me, his own master, askance!
And the thick heavy spume-flakes which aye and anon
His fierce lips shook upwards in galloping on.

VI.

By Hasselt, Dirck groaned; and cried Joris 'Stay spur!
Your Roos galloped bravely, the fault 's not in her,
We 'll remember at Aix'—for one heard the quick wheeze
Of her chest, saw the stretched neck and staggering knees,
And sunk tail, and horrible heave of the flank,
As down on her haunches she shuddered and sank.

VII.

So we were left galloping, Joris and I,
Past Looz and past Tongres, no cloud in the sky;
The broad sun above laughed a pitiless laugh,
'Neath our feet broke the brittle bright stubble like chaff;
Till over by Dalhem a dome-spire sprang white,
And 'Gallop,' gasped Joris, 'for Aix is in sight!

VIII.

How they 'll greet us!'—and all in a moment his roan
Rolled neck and croup over, lay dead as a stone;
And there was my Roland to bear the whole weight
Of the news which alone could save Aix from her fate,
With his nostrils like pits full of blood to the brim,
And with circles of red for his eye-sockets' rim.

IX.

Then I cast loose my buff-coat, each holster let fall,
Shook off both my jack-boots, let go belt and all,
Stood up in the stirrup, leaned, patted his ear,
Called my Roland his pet-name, my horse without peer;
Clapped my hands, laughed and sang, any noise, bad or good,
Till at length into Aix Roland galloped and stood.

X.

And all I remember is, friends flocking round
As I sat with his head 'twixt my knees on the ground;
And no voice but was praising this Roland of mine,
As I poured down his throat our last measure of wine,
Which (the burgesses voted by common consent)
Was no more than his due who brought good news from Ghent.

THE LOST LEADER.

I.

Just for a handful of silver he left us,
  Just for a riband to stick in his coat—
Found the one gift of which fortune bereft us,
  Lost all the others, she lets us devote;
They, with the gold to give, doled him out silver,
  So much was theirs who so little allowed:
How all our copper had gone for his service!
  Rags—were they purple, his heart had been proud!
We that had loved him so, followed him, honoured him,
  Lived in his mild and magnificent eye,
Learned his great language, caught his clear accents,
  Made him our pattern to live and to die!
Shakespeare was of us, Milton was for us,
  Burns, Shelley, were with us,—they watch from their graves!
He alone breaks from the van and the freemen,
  He alone sinks to the rear and the slaves!

II.

We shall march prospering,—not thro' his presence;
  Songs may inspirit us,—not from his lyre;
Deeds will be done,—while he boasts his quiescence,
  Still bidding crouch whom the rest bade aspire.
Blot out his name, then, record one lost soul more,
  One task more declined, one more footpath untrod,
One more devil's-triumph and sorrow for angels,
  One wrong more to man, one more insult to God!

Life's night begins: let him never come back to us!
  There would be doubt, hesitation, and pain,
Forced praise on our part—the glimmer of twilight,
  Never glad confident morning again!
Best fight on well, for we taught him—strike gallantly,
  Menace our heart ere we master his own;
Then let him receive the new knowledge and wait us,
  Pardoned in heaven, the first by the throne!

THE BISHOP ORDERS HIS TOMB AT ST. PRAXED'S CHURCH.

[Rome, 15—.]

VANITY, saith the preacher, vanity!
Draw round my bed: is Anselm keeping back?
Nephews—sons mine—ah God, I know not! Well—
She, men would have to be your mother once,
Old Gandolf envied me, so fair she was!
What 's done is done, and she is dead beside,
Dead long ago, and I am Bishop since,
And as she died so must we die ourselves,
And thence ye may perceive the world 's a dream.
Life, how and what is it? As here I lie
In this state-chamber, dying by degrees,
Hours and long hours in the dead night, I ask
'Do I live, am I dead?' Peace, peace seems all.
St. Praxed's ever was the church for peace;
And so about this tomb of mine. I fought
With tooth and nail to save my niche, ye know:—
Old Gandolf cozened me, despite my care;
Shrewd was that snatch from out the corner south
He graced his carrion with, God curse the same!
Yet still my niche is not so cramped but thence
One sees the pulpit on the epistle-side,
And somewhat of the choir, those silent seats,
And up into the aëry dome where live
The angels, and a sunbeam's sure to lurk:
And I shall fill my slab of basalt there,

And 'neath my tabernacle take my rest,
With those nine columns round me, two and two,
The odd one at my feet where Anselm stands:
Peach-blossom marble all, the rare, the ripe,
As fresh-poured red wine of a mighty pulse.—
Old Gandolf with his paltry onion-stone,
Put me where I may look at him! True peach,
Rosy and flawless: how I earned the prize!
Draw close: that conflagration of my church—
What then? So much was saved if aught were missed!
My sons, ye would not be my death? Go dig
The white-grape vineyard, where the oil-press stood,
Drop water gently till the surface sinks,
And if ye find—Ah, God, I know not, I!—
Bedded in store of rotten fig-leaves soft,
And corded up in a tight olive-frail,
Some lump, ah God, of *lapis lazuli*,
Big as a Jew's head cut off at the nape,
Blue as a vein o'er the Madonna's breast—
Sons, all have I bequeathed you, villas, all,
That brave Frascati villa with its bath,
So let the blue lump poise between my knees,
Like God the Father's globe on both his hands
Ye worship in the Jesu Church so gay,
For Gandolf shall not choose but see and burst!
Swift as a weaver's shuttle fleet our years;
Man goeth to the grave, and where is he?
Did I say basalt for my slab, sons? Black—
'T was ever antique-black I meant! How else
Shall ye contrast my frieze to come beneath?
The bas-relief in bronze ye promised me,
Those Pans and Nymphs ye wot of, and perchance
Some tripod, thyrsus, with a vase or so,
The Saviour at his sermon on the mount,
St. Praxed in a glory, and one Pan

Ready to twitch the Nymph's last garment off,
And Moses with the tables—but I know
Ye mark me not! What do they whisper thee,
Child of my bowels, Anselm? Ah, ye hope
To revel down my villas while I gasp,
Bricked o'er with beggar's mouldy travertine
Which Gandolf from his tomb-top chuckles at!
Nay, boys, ye love me—all of jasper, then!
'T is jasper ye stand pledged to, lest I grieve
My bath must needs be left behind, alas!
One block, pure green as a pistachio-nut,
There 's plenty jasper somewhere in the world—
And have I not St. Praxed's ear to pray
Horses for ye, and brown Greek manuscripts,
And mistresses with great smooth marbly limbs?—
That's if ye carve my epitaph aright,
Choice Latin, picked phrase, Tully's every word,
No gaudy ware like Gandolf's second line—
Tully, my masters? Ulpian serves his need!
And then how I shall lie through centuries,
And hear the blessed mutter of the mass,
And see God made and eaten all day long,
And feel the steady candle-flame, and taste
Good strong thick stupefying incense-smoke!
For as I lie here, hours of the dead night,
Dying in state and by such slow degrees,
I fold my arms as if they clasped a crook,
And stretch my feet forth straight as stone can point,
And let the bedclothes for a mortcloth drop
Into great laps and folds of sculptor's work;
And as yon tapers dwindle, and strange thoughts
Grow, with a certain humming in my ears,
About the life I lived before this life,
And this life too, popes, cardinals, and priests,
St. Praxed at his sermon on the mount,

Your tall pale mother with her talking eyes,
And new-found agate urns as fresh as day,
And marble's language, Latin pure, discreet,—
Aha, ELUCESCEBAT quoth our friend?
No Tully, said I, Ulpian at the best!
Evil and brief hath been my pilgrimage.
All *lapis*, all, sons! Else I give the Pope
My villas: will ye ever eat my heart?
Ever your eyes were as a lizard's quick,
They glitter like your mother's for my soul,
Or ye would heighten my impoverished frieze,
Piece out its starved design, and fill my vase
With grapes, and add a vizor and a Term,
And to the tripod ye would tie a lynx,
That in his struggle throws the thyrsus down,
To comfort me on my entablature
Whereon I am to lie till I must ask
'Do I live, am I dead?' There, leave me, there!
For ye have stabbed me with ingratitude
To death—ye wish it—God, ye wish it! Stone—
Gritstone, a-crumble! Clammy squares which sweat
As if the corpse they keep were oozing through—
And no more *lapis* to delight the world!
Well, go! I bless ye. Fewer tapers there,
But in a row: and, going, turn your backs—
Ay, like departing altar-ministrants,
And leave me in my church, the church for peace,
That I may watch at leisure if he leers—
Old Gandolf, at me, from his onion-stone,
As still he envied me, so fair she was!

RABBI BEN EZRA.

I.

Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was made:
Our times are in His hand
Who saith 'A whole I planned,
Youth shows but half; trust God: see all, nor be afraid!'

II.

Not that, amassing flowers,
Youth sighed 'Which rose make ours,
Which lily leave and then as best recall!'
Not that, admiring stars,
It yearned 'Nor Jove, nor Mars;
Mine be some figured flame which blends, transcends them
all!'

III.

Not for such hopes and fears
Annulling youth's brief years,
Do I remonstrate; folly wide the mark!
Rather I prize the doubt
Low kinds exist without,
Finished and finite clods, untroubled by a spark.

IV.

Poor vaunt of life indeed,
Were man but formed to feed

On joy, to solely seek and find and feast:
Such feasting ended, then
As sure an end to men;
Irks care the crop-full bird? Frets doubt the maw-crammed beast?

V.

Rejoice we are allied
To That which doth provide
And not partake, effect and not receive!
A spark disturbs our clod;
Nearer we hold of God
Who gives, than of His tribes that take, I must believe.

VI.

Then, welcome each rebuff
That turn's earth's smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go!
Be our joys three-parts pain!
Strive, and hold cheap the strain;
Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never grudge the throe!

VII.

For thence—a paradox
Which comforts while it mocks—
Shall life succeed in that it seems to fail:
What I aspired to be,
And was not, comforts me;
A brute I might have been, but would not sink i' the scale.

VIII.

What is he but a brute
Whose flesh hath soul to suit,
Whose spirit works lest arms and legs want play?
To man, propose this test—
Thy body at its best,
How far can that project thy soul on its lone way?

IX.

Yet gifts should prove their use:
I own the Past profuse
Of power each side, perfection every turn:
Eyes, ears took in their dole,
Brain treasured up the whole;
Should not the heart beat once 'How good to live and
learn?'

X.

Not once beat 'Praise be Thine!
I see the whole design,
I, who saw power, see now love perfect too:
Perfect I call Thy plan:
Thanks that I was a man!
Maker, remake, complete,—I trust what Thou shalt do!'

XI.

For pleasant is this flesh;
Our soul, in its rose-mesh
Pulled ever to the earth, still yearns for rest:
Would we some prize might hold
To match those manifold
Possessions of the brute,—gain most, as we did best!

XII.

Let us not always say
'Spite of this flesh to-day
I strove, made head, gained ground upon the whole!'
As the bird wings and sings,
Let us cry 'All good things
Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh helps
soul!'

XIII.

Therefore I summon age
To grant youth's heritage,
Life's struggle having so far reached its term:
Thence shall I pass, approved
A man, for aye removed
From the developed brute; a God though in the germ.

XIV.

And I shall thereupon
Take rest, ere I be gone
Once more on my adventure brave and new;
Fearless and unperplexed,
When I wage battle next,
What weapons to select, what armour to indue. .

XV.

Youth ended, I shall try
My gain or loss thereby;
Leave the fire ashes, what survives is gold:
And I shall weigh the same,
Give life its praise or blame:
Young, all lay in dispute; I shall know, being old.

XVI.

For note, when evening shuts,
A certain moment cuts
The deed off, calls the glory from the gray:
A whisper from the west
Shoots—'Add this to the rest,
Take it and try its worth: here dies another day.'

XVII.

So, still within this life,
Though lifted o'er its strife,

Let me discern, compare, pronounce at last,
'This rage was right i' the main,
That acquiescence vain:
The Future I may face now I have proved the Past.'

XVIII.

For more is not reserved
To man, with soul just nerved
To act to-morrow what he learns to-day;
Here, work enough to watch
The Master work, and catch
Hints of the proper craft, tricks of the tool's true play.

XIX.

As it was better, youth
Should strive, through acts uncouth,
Toward making, than repose on aught found made;
So, better, age, exempt
From strife, should know, than tempt
Further. Thou waitedst age; wait death nor be afraid!

XX.

Enough now, if the Right
And Good and Infinite
Be named here, as thou call'st thy hand thine own,
With knowledge absolute,
Subject to no dispute
From fools that crowded youth, nor let thee feel alone.

XXI.

Be there, for once and all,
Severed great minds from small,
Announced to each his station in the Past!
Was I the world arraigned,
Were they my soul disdained,
Right? Let age speak the truth and give us peace at last!

XXII.

Now, who shall arbitrate?
Ten men love what I hate,
Shun what I follow, slight what I receive;
Ten, who in ears and eyes
Match me: we all surmise,
They this thing, and I that; whom shall my soul believe?

XXIII.

Not on the vulgar mass
Called 'work' must sentence pass,
Things done, that took the eye and had the price;
O'er which, from level stand,
The low world laid its hand,
Found straightway to its mind, could value in a trice:

XXIV.

But all, the world's coarse thumb
And finger failed to plumb,
So passed in making up the main account;
All instincts immature,
All purposes unsure,
That weighed not as his work, yet swelled the man's amount;

XXV.

Thoughts hardly to be packed
Into a narrow act,
Fancies that broke through language and escaped;
All I could never be,
All men ignored in me,
This I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped.

XXVI.

Ay, note that Potter's wheel,
That metaphor! and feel

Why time spins fast, why passive lies our clay,—
Thou, to whom fools propound,
When the wine makes its round,
'Since life fleets, all is change; the Past gone, seize to-
day!'

XXVII.

Fool! All that is at all
Lasts ever, past recall;
Earth changes, but thy soul and God stand sure:
What entered into thee,
That was, is, and shall be:
Time's wheel runs back or stops; Potter and clay endure.

XXVIII.

He fixed thee mid this dance
Of plastic circumstance,
This Present, thou, forsooth, wouldst fain arrest
Machinery just meant
To give thy soul its bent,
Try thee and turn thee forth, sufficiently impressed.

XXIX.

What though the earlier grooves
Which ran the laughing loves
Around thy base, no longer pause and press?
What though, about thy rim,
Skull-things in order grim
Grow out, in graver mood, obey the sterner stress?

XXX.

Look thou not down but up!
To uses of a cup,
The festal board, lamp's flash and trumpet's peal,
The new wine's foaming flow,
The Master's lips a-glow!
Thou, heaven's consummate cup, what needst thou with
earth's wheel?

XXXI.

But I need, now as then,
Thee, God, who mouldest men;
And since, not even while the whirl was worst,
Did I,—to the wheel of life,
With shapes and colours rife,
Bound dizzily,—mistake my end, to slake Thy thirst;

XXXII.

So take and use Thy work,
Amend what flaws may lurk,
What strain o' the stuff, what warpings past the aim!
My times be in Thy hand!
Perfect the cup as planned!
Let age approve of youth, and death complete the same!



BEN KARSHOOK'S WISDOM.

I.

'WOULD a man 'scape the rod?'
Rabbi Ben Karshook saith,
'See that he turn to God
The day before his death.'

'Ay, could a man inquire
When it shall come!' I say:
The Rabbi's eye shoots fire—
'Then let him turn to-day!'

II.

Quoth a young Sadducee:
'Reader of many rolls,
Is it so certain we
Have, as they tell us, souls?'

'Son, there is no reply!'
The Rabbi bit his beard:
'Certain, a soul have *I*—
We may have none,' he sneer'd.

Thus Karshook, the Hiram's-Hammer,
The Right-hand Temple-column,
Taught babes in grace their grammar,
And struck the simple, solemn.

'CHILDE ROLAND TO THE DARK TOWER CAME.'

(See Edgar's song in 'LEAR.')

I.

My first thought was, he lied in every word,
That hoary cripple, with malicious eye
Askance to watch the working of his lie
On mine, and mouth scarce able to afford
Suppression of the glee, that pursed and scored
Its edge, at one more victim gained thereby.

II.

What else should he be set for, with his staff?
What, save to waylay with his lies, ensnare
All travellers who might find him posted there,
And ask the road? I guessed what skull-like laugh
Would break, what crutch 'gin write my epitaph
For pastime in the dusty thoroughfare,

III.

If at his counsel I should turn aside
Into that ominous tract which, all agree,
Hides the Dark Tower. Yet acquiescingly
I did turn as he pointed; neither pride
Nor hope rekindling at the end descried,
So much as gladness that some end might be.

IV.

For, what with my whole world-wide wandering,
  What with my search drawn out thro' years, my hope
  Dwindled into a ghost not fit to cope
With that obstreperous joy success would bring,—
I hardly tried now to rebuke the spring
  My heart made, finding failure in its scope.

V.

As when a sick man very near to death
  Seems dead indeed, and feels begin and end
  The tears and takes the farewell of each friend,
And hears one bid the other go, draw breath
Freelier outside ('since all is o'er,' he saith,
  'And the blow fallen no grieving can amend');

VI.

While some discuss if near the other graves
  Be room enough for this, and when a day
  Suits best for carrying the corpse away,
With care about the banners, scarves, and staves:
And still the man hears all, and only craves
  He may not shame such tender love and stay.

VII.

Thus, I had so long suffered in this quest,
  Heard failure prophesied so oft, been writ
  So many times among 'The Band'—to wit,
The knights who to the Dark Tower's search addressed
Their steps—that just to fail as they, seemed best,
  And all the doubt was now—should I be fit?

VIII.

So, quiet as despair, I turned from him,
  That hateful cripple, out of his highway
  Into the path he pointed. All the day

Had been a dreary one at best, and dim
Was settling to its close, yet shot one grim
  Red leer to see the plain catch its estray.

IX.

For mark! no sooner was I fairly found
  Pledged to the plain, after a pace or two,
  Than, pausing to throw backward a last view
O'er the safe road, 't was gone; gray plain all round:
Nothing but plain to the horizon's bound.
  I might go on; nought else remained to do.

X.

So on I went. I think I never saw
  Such starved ignoble nature; nothing throve:
  For flowers—as well expect a cedar grove!
But cockle, spurge, according to their law
Might propagate their kind, with none to awe,
  You 'd think; a burr had been a treasure trove.

XI.

No! penury, inertness, and grimace,
  In some strange sort, were the land's portion. 'See
  Or shut your eyes,' said Nature peevishly,
'It nothing skills; I cannot help my case:
'T is the Last Judgment's fire must cure this place,
  Calcine its clods and set my prisoners free.'

XII.

If there pushed any ragged thistle-stalk
  Above its mates, the head was chopped; the bents
  Were jealous else. What made those holes and rents
In the dock's harsh swarth leaves, bruised as to baulk
All hope of greenness? 't is a brute must walk
  Pashing their life out, with a brute's intents.

XIII.

As for the grass, it grew as scant as hair
  In leprosy; thin dry blades pricked the mud
  Which underneath looked kneaded up with blood.
One stiff blind horse, his every bone a-stare,
Stood stupefied, however he came there;
  Thrust out past service from the devil's stud!

XIV.

Alive? he might be dead for aught I know,
  With that red gaunt and colloped neck a-strain,
  And shut eyes underneath the rusty mane;
Seldom went such grotesqueness with such woe;
I never saw a brute I hated so;
  He must be wicked to deserve such pain.

XV.

I shut my eyes and turned them on my heart.
  As a man calls for wine before he fights,
  I asked one draught of earlier, happier sights,
Ere fitly I could hope to play my part.
Think first, fight afterwards—the soldier's art;
  One taste of the old time sets all to rights.

XVI.

Not it! I fancied Cuthbert's reddening face
  Beneath its garniture of curly gold,
  Dear fellow, till I almost felt him fold
An arm in mine to fix me to the place,
That way he used. Alas, one night's disgrace!
  Out went my heart's new fire and left it cold.

XVII.

Giles then, the soul of honour—there he stands
  Frank as ten years ago when knighted first.
  What honest man should dare (he said) he durst.

Good—but the scene shifts—faugh! what hangman hands
Pin to his breast a parchment? His own bands
  Read it. Poor traitor, spit upon and curst!

XVIII.

Better this present than a past like that;
  Back therefore to my darkening path again!
  No sound, no sight as far as eye could strain.
Will the night send a howlet or a bat?
I asked; when something on the dismal flat
  Came to arrest my thoughts and change their train.

XIX.

A sudden little river crossed my path
  As unexpected as a serpent comes.
  No sluggish tide congenial to the glooms;
This, as it frothed by, might have been a bath
For the fiend's glowing hoof—to see the wrath
  Of its black eddy bespate with flakes and spumes.

XX.

So petty yet so spiteful! All along,
  Low scrubby alders kneeled down over it;
  Drenched willows flung them headlong in a fit
Of mute despair, a suicidal throng:
The river which had done them all the wrong,
  Whate'er that was, rolled by, deterred no whit.

XXI.

Which, while I forded,—good saints, how I feared
  To set my foot upon a dead man's cheek,
  Each step, or feel the spear I thrust to seek
For hollows, tangled in his hair or beard!—
  may have been a water-rat I speared,
  But, ugh! it sounded like a baby's shriek.

XXII.

Glad was I when I reached the other bank.
  Now for a better country. Vain presage!
  Who were the strugglers, what war did they wage
Whose savage trample thus could pad the dank
Soil to a plash? Toads in a poisoned tank,
  Or wild cats in a red-hot iron cage—

XXIII.

The fight must so have seemed in that fell cirque.
  What penned them there, with all the plain to choose?
  No foot-print leading to that horrid mews,
None out of it. Mad brewage set to work
Their brains, no doubt, like galley-slaves the Turk
  Pits for his pastime, Christians against Jews.

XXIV.

And more than that—a furlong on—why, there!
  What bad use was that engine for, that wheel,
  Or brake, not wheel—that harrow fit to reel
Men's bodies out like silk? with all the air
Of Tophet's tool, on earth left unaware,
  Or brought to sharpen its rusty teeth of steel.

XXV.

Then came a bit of stubbed ground, once a wood,
  Next a marsh, it would seem, and now mere earth
  Desperate and done with (so a fool finds mirth,
Makes a thing and then mars it, till his mood
Changes and off he goes!)—within a rood
  Bog, clay, and rubble, sand and stark black dearth.

XXVI.

Now blotches rankling, coloured gay and grim,
  Now patches where some leanness of the soil 's
  Broke into moss or substances like boils;

Then came some palsied oak, a cleft in him
Like a distorted mouth that splits its rim
  Gaping at death, and dies while it recoils.

XXVII.

And just as far as ever from the end,
  Nought in the distance but the evening, nought
  To point my footstep further! At the thought,
A great black bird, Apollyon's bosom-friend,
Sailed past, nor beat his wide wing dragon-penned
  That brushed my cap—perchance the guide I sought.

XXVIII.

For, looking up, aware I somehow grew,
  Spite of the dusk, the plain had given place
  All round to mountains—with such name to grace
Mere ugly heights and heaps now stolen in view.
How thus they had surprised me,—solve it, you!
  How to get from them was no clearer case.

XXIX.

Yet half I seemed to recognize some trick
  Of mischief happened to me, God knows when—
  In a bad dream perhaps. Here ended, then,
Progress this way. When, in the very nick
Of giving up, one time more, came a click
  As when a trap shuts—you 're inside the den.

XXX.

Burningly it came on me all at once,
  This was the place! those two hills on the right,
  Crouched like two bulls locked horn in horn in fight,
While, to the left, a tall scalped mountain—Dunce,
Dotard, a-dozing at the very nonce,
  After a life spent training for the sight!

XXXI.

What in the midst lay but the Tower itself?
  The round squat turret, blind as the fool's heart,
  Built of brown stone, without a counterpart
In the whole world. The tempest's mocking elf
Points to the shipman thus the unseen shelf
He strikes on, only when the timbers start.

XXXII.

Not see? because of night perhaps?—why, day
  Came back again for that! before it left,
  The dying sunset kindled through a cleft;
The hills, like giants at a hunting, lay,
Chin upon hand, to see the game at bay,—
  'Now stab and end the creature—to the heft!'

XXXIII.

Not hear? when noise was everywhere! it tolled
  Increasing like a bell. Names in my ears
  Of all the lost adventurers my peers,—
How such a one was strong, and such was bold,
And such was fortunate, yet each of old
  Lost, lost! one moment knelled the woe of years.

XXXIV.

There they stood, ranged along the hill-sides, met
  To view the last of me, a living frame
  For one more picture! in a sheet of flame
I saw them and I knew them all. And yet
Dauntless the slug-horn to my lips I set,
  And blew '*Childe Roland to the Dark Tower came.*'

THE BOY AND THE ANGEL.

Morning, evening, noon, and night,
'Praise God!' sang Theocrite.

Then to his poor trade he turned,
Whereby the daily meal was earned.

Hard he laboured, long and well;
O'er his work the boy's curls fell:

But ever, at each period,
He stopped and sang, 'Praise God!'

Then back again his curls he threw,
And cheerful turned to work anew.

Said Blaise, the listening monk, 'Well done;
I doubt not thou art heard, my son;

As well as if thy voice to-day
Were praising God the Pope's great way.

This Easter Day, the Pope at Rome
Praises God from Peter's dome.'

Said Theocrite, 'Would God that I
Might praise Him that great way, and die!'

Night passed, day shone,
And Theocrite was gone.

With God a day endures alway,
A thousand years are but a day.

God said in heaven, 'Nor day nor night
Now brings the voice of my delight.'

Then Gabriel, like a rainbow's birth,
Spread his wings and sank to earth;

Entered, in flesh, the empty cell,
Lived there, and played the craftsman well;

And morning, evening, noon, and night,
Praised God in place of Theocrite.

And from a boy to youth he grew;
The man put off the stripling's hue;

The man matured and fell away
Into the season of decay;

And ever o'er the trade he bent,
And ever lived on earth content.

(He did God's will; to him, all one
If on the earth or in the sun.)

God said, 'A praise is in mine ear;
There is no doubt in it, no fear:

So sing old worlds, and so
New worlds that from my footstool go.

Clearer loves sound other ways:
I miss my little human praise.'

Then forth sprang Gabriel's wings, off fell
The flesh disguise, remained the cell.

'T was Easter Day: he flew to Rome,
And paused above Saint Peter's dome.

In the tiring-room close by
The great outer gallery,

With his holy vestments dight,
Stood the new Pope, Theocrite:

And all his past career
Came back upon him clear,

Since when, a boy, he plied his trade,
Till on his life the sickness weighed;

And in his cell, when death drew near,
An angel in a dream brought cheer:

And, rising from the sickness drear,
He grew a priest, and now stood here.

To the East with praise he turned,
And on his sight the angel burned.

'I bore thee from thy craftsman's cell,
And set thee here; I did not well.

Vainly I left my angel-sphere,
Vain was thy dream of many a year.

Thy voice's praise seemed weak; it dropped—
Creation's chorus stopped!

Go back and praise again
The early way, while I remain.

With that weak voice of our disdain,
Take up creation's pausing strain.

Back to the cell and poor employ;
Resume the craftsman and the boy!'

Theocrite grew old at home;
A new Pope dwelt in Peter's dome.

One vanished as the other died:
They sought God side by side.

TWO CAMELS.

From 'Ferishtah's Fancies.'

Quoth one: 'Sir, solve a scruple! No true sage
I hear of, but instructs his scholar thus:
"Wouldst thou be wise? Then mortify thyself!
Baulk of its craving every bestial sense!
Say, 'If I relish melons—so do swine!
Horse, ass, and mule consume their provender
Nor leave a pea-pod: fasting feeds the soul.'"
Thus they admonish; while thyself, I note,
Eatest thy ration with an appetite,
Nor fallest foul of whoso licks his lips
And sighs "Well-saffroned was that barley-soup!"
Can wisdom coexist with—gorge-and-swill
I say not—simply sensual preference
For this or that fantastic meat and drink?
Moreover, wind blows sharper than its wont
This morning, and thou hast already donned
Thy sheepskin over-garment: sure the sage
Is busied with conceits that soar above
A petty change of season and its chance
Of causing ordinary flesh to sneeze?
I always thought, Sir'—
'Son,' Ferishtah said,
'Truth ought to seem as never thought before.
How if I give it birth in parable?
A neighbour owns two camels, beasts of price
And promise, destined each to go, next week,

Swiftly and surely with his merchandise
From Nishapur to Sebzevah, no truce
To tramp, but travel, spite of sands and drouth,
In days so many, lest they miss the Fair.
Each falls to meditation o'er his crib
Piled high with provender before the start.
Quoth this. "My soul is set on winning praise
From goodman lord and master—hump to hoof,
I dedicate me to his service. How?
Grass, purslane, lupines, and I know not what,
Crammed in my manger? Ha, I see, I see!
No, master, spare thy money! I shall trudge
The distance and yet cost thee not a doit
Beyond my supper on this mouldy bran."
"Be magnified, O master, for the meal
So opportunely liberal!" quoth that.
"What use of strength in me but to surmount
Sands and simooms, and bend beneath thy bales
No knee until I reach the glad bazaar?
Thus I do justice to thy fare: no sprig
Of toothsome chervil must I leave unchewed!
Too bitterly should I reproach myself
Did I sink down in sight of Sebzevah,
Remembering how the merest mouthful more
Had heartened me to manage yet a mile!"
And so it proved: the too-abstemious brute
Midway broke down, his pack rejoiced the thieves,
His carcass fed the vultures; not so he
The wisely thankful, who, good market-drudge,
Let down his lading in the market-place,
No damage to a single pack. Which beast,
Think ye, had praise and patting and a brand
Of good-and-faithful-servant fixed on flank?
[illegible] with thy squeamish scruple—what imports
[illegible] or feasting? Do thy day's work, dare

Refuse no help thereto, since help refused
Is hindrance sought and found. Win but the race—
Who shall object "He tossed three wine-cups off,
And, just at starting, Lilith kissed his lips?"

'More soberly,—consider this, my Son!
Put case I never have myself enjoyed,
Known by experience what enjoyment means,
How shall I—share enjoyment?—no, indeed!—
Supply it to my fellows,—ignorant,
As so I should be of the thing they crave,
How it affects them, works for good or ill.
Style my enjoyment self-indulgence—sin—
Why should I labour to infect my kind
With sin's occasion, bid them too enjoy,
Who else might neither catch nor give again
Joy's plague, but live in righteous misery?
Just as I cannot, till myself convinced,
Impart conviction, so, to deal forth joy
Adroitly, needs must I know joy myself.
Renounce joy for my fellows' sake? That 's joy
Beyond joy; but renounced for mine, not theirs?
Why, the physician called to help the sick
Cries "Let me, first of all, discard my health!"
No, Son: the richness hearted in such joy
Is in the knowing what are gifts we give,
Not in a vain endeavour not to know!
Therefore, desire joy and thank God for it!
The Adversary said—a Jew reports—
החנם ירא איוב אלהים:
In Persian phrase, "Does Job fear God for nought?"
Job's creatureship is not abjured, thou fool!
He nowise isolates himself and plays
The independent equal, owns no more
Than himself gave himself, so why thank God?

A proper speech were this מאלחים
" Equals we are, Job, labour for thyself,
Nor bid me help thee ; bear, as best flesh may,
Pains I inflict not nor avail to cure ;
Beg of me nothing thou mayst win thyself
By work, or waive with magnanimity,
Since we are peers acknowledged—scarcely peers
Had I implanted any want of thine
Only my power could meet and gratify."
No: rather hear, at man's indifference,
" Wherefore did I contrive for thee that ear
Hungry for music, and direct thine eye
To where I hold a seven-stringed instrument,
Unless I meant thee to beseech me play?" '

YOUTH AND ART.

I.

IT once might have been, once only:
  We lodged in a street together,
You, a sparrow on the housetop lonely,
  I, a lone she-bird of his feather.

II.

Your trade was with sticks and clay,
  You thumbed, thrust, patted, and polished,
Then laughed, 'They will see, some day,
  Smith made, and Gibson demolished.'

III.

My business was song, song, song;
  I chirped, cheeped, trilled, and twittered,
'Kate Brown 's on the boards ere long,
  And Grisi's existence imbittered!'

IV.

I earned no more by a warble
  Than you by a sketch in plaster;
You wanted a piece of marble,
  I needed a music-master.

V.

We studied hard in our styles,
  Chipped each at a crust like Hindoos,
For air, looked out on the tiles,
  For fun, watched each other's windows.

VI.

You lounged, like a boy of the South,
  Cap and blouse—nay, a bit of beard too;
Or you got it, rubbing your mouth
  With fingers the clay adhered to.

VII.

And I—soon managed to find
  Weak points in the flower-fence facing,
Was forced to put up a blind
  And be safe in my corset-lacing.

VIII.

No harm! It was not my fault
  If you never turned your eye's tail up
As I shook upon E *in alt.*,
  Or ran the chromatic scale up;

IX.

For spring bade the sparrows pair,
  And the boys and girls gave guesses,
And stalls in our street looked rare
  With bulrush and watercresses.

X.

Why did not you pinch a flower
  In a pellet of clay and fling it?
Why did not I put a power
  Of thanks in a look, or sing it?

XI.

I did look, sharp as a lynx
  (And yet the memory rankles)
When models arrived, some minx
  Tripped up stairs, she and her ankles.

XII.

But I think I gave you as good!
  'That foreign fellow—who can know
How she pays, in a playful mood,
  For his tuning her that piano?'

XIII.

Could you say so, and never say
  'Suppose we join hands and fortunes,
And I fetch her from over the way,
  Her, piano, and long tunes and short tunes?'

XIV.

No, no; you would not be rash,
  Nor I rasher and something over:
You 've to settle yet Gibson's hash,
  And Grisi yet lives in clover.

XV.

But you meet the Prince at the Board,
  I 'm queen myself at *bals-parés*,
I 've married a rich old lord,
  And you 're dubbed knight and an R.A.

XVI.

Each life 's unfulfilled, you see;
  It hangs still, patchy and scrappy:
We have not sighed deep, laughed free,
  Starved, feasted, despaired,—been happy.

XVII.

And nobody calls you a dunce,
  And people suppose me clever;
This could but have happened once,
  And we missed it, lost it forever.

SONG.

From 'A Blot in the 'Scutcheon.'

There 's a woman like a dewdrop, she 's so purer than the purest;
And her noble heart 's the noblest, yes, and her sure faith 's the surest;
And her eyes are dark and humid, like the depth on depth of lustre
Hid i' the harebell, while her tresses, sunnier than the wild-grape cluster,
Gush in golden-tinted plenty down her neck's rose-misted marble:
Then her voice 's music—call it the well's bubbling, the bird's warble!

And this woman says, 'My days were sunless and my nights were moonless,
Parched the pleasant April herbage, and the lark's heart's outbreak tuneless,
If you loved me not!' And I who—(ah, for words of flame!) adore her!
Who am mad to lay my spirit prostrate palpably before her—

may enter at her portal soon, as now her lattice takes me,
... noontide as by midnight make her mine, as hers
... makes me!

MAY AND DEATH.

I.

I WISH that when you died last May,
  Charles, there had died along with you
Three parts of spring's delightful things;
  Ay, and, for me, the fourth part too.

II.

A foolish thought, and worse, perhaps!
  There must be many a pair of friends
Who, arm in arm, deserve the warm
  Moon-births and the long evening-ends.

III.

So, for their sake, be May still May!
  Let their new time, as mine of old,
Do all it did for me: I bid
  Sweet sights and sounds throng manifold.

IV.

Only, one little sight, one plant,
  Woods have in May, that starts up green
Save a sole streak which, so to speak,
  Is spring's blood, spilt its leaves between,—

V.

That, they might spare; a certain wood
  Might miss the plant; their loss were small:
But I—whene'er the leaf grows there,
  Its drop comes from my heart, that 's all.

MY STAR.

ALL that I know
Of a certain star
Is, it can throw—
Like the angled spar—
Now a dart of red,
Now a dart of blue;
Till my friends have said
They would fain see, too,
My star that dartles the red and the blue!
Then it stops like a bird; like a flower, hangs furled:
They must solace themselves with the Saturn above it.
What matter to me if their star is a world?
Mine has opened its soul to me; therefore I love it.

ONE WORD MORE.

To E. B. B.

I.

THERE they are, my fifty men and women
Naming me the fifty poems finished!
Take them, Love, the book and me together.
Where the heart lies, let the brain lie also.

II.

Rafael made a century of sonnets,
Made and wrote them in a certain volume
Dinted with the silver-pointed pencil
Else he only used to draw Madonnas.
These, the world might view—but one, the volume.
Who that one, you ask? Your heart instructs you.
Did she live and love it all her lifetime?
Did she drop, his lady of the sonnets,
Die, and let it drop beside her pillow
Where it lay in place of Rafael's glory,
Rafael's cheek so duteous and so loving—
Cheek, the world was wont to hail a painter's,
Rafael's cheek, her love had turned a poet's?

III.

You and I would rather read that volume
(Taken to his beating bosom by it),

Lean and list the bosom-beats of Rafael,
Would we not? than wonder at Madonnas—
Her, San Sisto names, and her, Foligno,
Her that visits Florence in a vision,
Her that 's left with lilies in the Louvre—
Seen by us and all the world in circle.

IV.

You and I will never read that volume.
Guido Reni, like his own eye's apple
Guarded long the treasure-book and loved it.
Guido Reni dying, all Bologna
Cried, and the world with it, 'Ours the treasure!'
Suddenly, as rare things will, it vanished.

V.

Dante once prepared to paint an angel:
Whom to please? You whisper 'Beatrice.'
While he mused and traced it and retraced it
(Peradventure with a pen corroded
Still by drops of that hot ink he dipped for,
When, his left hand i' the hair o' the wicked,
Back he held the brow and pricked its stigma,
Bit into the live man's flesh for parchment,
Loosed him, laughed to see the writing rankle,
Let the wretch go festering through Florence)—
Dante, who loved well because he hated,
Hated wickedness that hinders loving,
Dante standing, studying his angel,—
In there broke the folk of his Inferno.
Says he—'Certain people of importance'
(Such he gave his daily, dreadful line to)
'Entered and would seize, forsooth, the poet.'
Says the ' I stopped my painting.'

VI.

You and I would rather see that angel,
Painted by the tenderness of Dante,—
Would we not?—than read a fresh Inferno.

VII.

You and I will never see that picture.
While he mused on love and Beatrice,
While he softened o'er his outlined angel,
In they broke, those 'people of importance:'
We and Bice bear the loss forever.

VIII.

What of Rafael's sonnets, Dante's picture?
This: no artist lives and loves that longs not
Once, and only once, and for one only
(Ah, the prize!), to find his love a language
Fit and fair and simple and sufficient—
Using nature that 's an art to others,
Not, this one time, art that 's turned his nature.
Ay, of all the artists living, loving,
None but would forego his proper dowry—
Does he paint? he fain would write a poem—
Does he write? he fain would paint a picture,
Put to proof art alien to the artist's,
Once, and only once, and for one only,
So to be the man and leave the artist,
Gain the man's joy, miss the artist's sorrow.

IX.

Wherefore? Heaven's gift takes earth's abatement!
He who smites the rock and spreads the water,

Bidding drink and live a crowd beneath him,
Even he, the minute makes immortal,
Proves, perchance, but mortal in the minute,
Desecrates, belike, the deed in doing.
While he smites, how can he but remember,
So he smote before, in such a peril,
When they stood and mocked, Shall smiting help us?'
When they drank and sneered, 'A stroke is easy!'
When they wiped their mouths and went their journey
Throwing him for thanks, 'But drought was pleasant!'
Thus old memories mar the actual triumph;
Thus the doing savours of disrelish;
Thus achievement lacks a gracious somewhat;
O'er-importuned brows becloud the mandate,
Carelessness or consciousness the gesture.
For he bears an ancient wrong about him,
Sees and knows again those phalanxed faces,
Hears, yet one time more, the 'customed prelude—
'How shouldst thou, of all men, smite, and save us?'
Guesses what is like to prove the sequel—
'Egypt's flesh-pots—nay, the drought was better.'

X.

Oh, the crowd must have emphatic warrant!
Theirs the Sinai-forehead's cloven brilliance,
Right-arm's rod-sweep, tongue's imperial fiat.
Never dares the man put off the prophet.

XI.

Did he love one face from out the thousands
(Were she Jethro's daughter, white and wifely,
Were she but the Æthiopian bond-slave),
He would envy yon dumb patient camel,
Keeping a reserve of scanty water
Meant to save his own life in the desert;

Ready in the desert to deliver
(Kneeling down to let his breast be opened)
Hoard and life together for his mistress.

XII.

I shall never, in the years remaining,
Paint you pictures, no, nor carve you statues,
Make you music that should all-express me;
So it seems: I stand on my attainment.
This of verse alone one life allows me;
Verse and nothing else have I to give you.
Other heights in other lives, God willing—
All the gifts from all the heights, your own, Love!

XIII.

Yet a semblance of resource avails us—
Shade so finely touched, love's sense must seize it.
Take these lines, look lovingly and nearly,
Lines I write the first time and the last time.
He who works in fresco steals a hair-brush,
Curbs the liberal hand, subservient proudly,
Cramps his spirit, crowds its all in little,
Makes a strange art of an art familiar,
Fills his lady's missal-marge with flowerets.
He who blows thro' bronze may breathe thro' silver,
Fitly serenade a slumbrous princess.
He who writes may write for once as I do.

XIV.

Love, you saw me gather men and women,
Live or dead or fashioned by my fancy,
Enter each and all, and use their service,
Speak from every mouth,—the speech a poem.
Hardly shall I tell my joys and sorrows,
Hopes and fears, belief and disbelieving:

I am mine and yours—the rest be all men's,
Karshish, Cleon, Norbert, and the fifty.
Let me speak this once in my true person,
Not as Lippo, Roland, or Andrea,
Though the fruit of speech be just this sentence—
Pray you, look on these my men and women,
Take and keep my fifty poems finished;
Where my heart lies, let my brain lie also!
Poor the speech; be how I speak, for all things.

XV.

Not but that you know me! Lo, the moon's self!
Here in London, yonder late in Florence,
Still we find her face, the thrice-transfigured.
Curving on a sky imbrued with colour,
Drifted over Fiesole by twilight,
Came she, our new crescent of a hair's-breadth.
Full she flared it, lamping Samminiato,
Rounder 'twixt the cypresses and rounder,
Perfect till the nightingales applauded.
Now, a piece of her old self, impoverished,
Hard to greet, she traverses the house-roofs,
Hurries with unhandsome thrift of silver,
Goes dispiritedly, glad to finish.

XVI.

What, there's nothing in the moon noteworthy?
Nay: for if that moon could love a mortal,
Use, to charm him (so to fit a fancy),
All her magic ('t is the old sweet mythos),
She would turn a new side to her mortal,
Side unseen of herdsman, huntsman, steersman—
Blank to Zoroaster on his terrace,
Blind to Galileo on his turret,
Dumb to Homer, dumb to Keats—him, even!

Think, the wonder of the moonstruck mortal—
When she turns round, comes again in heaven,
Opens out anew for worse or better?
Proves she like some portent of an iceberg
Swimming full upon the ship it founders,
Hungry with huge teeth of splintered crystals?
Proves she as the paved-work of a sapphire
Seen by Moses when he climbed the mountain?
Moses, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu
Climbed and saw the very God, the Highest,
Stand upon the paved-work of a sapphire.
Like the bodied heaven in his clearness
Shone the stone, the sapphire of that paved-work,
When they ate and drank and saw God also!

XVII.

What were seen? None knows, none ever shall know.
Only this is sure—the sight were other,
Not the moon's same side, born late in Florence,
Dying now impoverished here in London.
God be thanked, the meanest of his creatures
Boasts two soul-sides, one to face the world with,
One to show a woman when he loves her.

XVIII.

This I say of me, but think of you, Love!
This to you—yourself my moon of poets!
Ah, but that 's the world's side—there 's the wonder—
Thus they see you, praise you, think they know you!
There, in turn, I stand with them and praise you!
Out of my own self, I dare to phrase it.
But the best is when I glide from out them,
Cross a step or two of dubious twilight,
Come out on the other side, the novel
Silent, silver lights and darks undreamed of,
Where I hush and bless myself with silence.

XIX.

Oh, their Rafael of the dear Madonnas,
Oh, their Dante of the dread Inferno,
Wrote one song—and in my brain I sing it,
Drew one angel—borne, see, on my bosom!



PROSPICE.

FEAR death?—to feel the fog in my throat,
The mist in my face,
When the snows begin, and the blasts denote
I am nearing the place,
The power of the night, the press of the storm,
The post of the foe,
Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a visible form?
Yet the strong man must go;
For the journey is done and the summit attained,
And the barriers fall,
Though a battle 's to fight ere the guerdon be gained,
The reward of it all.
I was ever a fighter, so—one fight more,
The best and the last!
I would hate that death bandaged my eyes, and forbore,
And bade me creep past.
No! let me taste the whole of it, fare like my peers,
The heroes of old,
Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad life's arrears
Of pain, darkness, and cold.
For sudden the worst turns the best to the brave,
The black minute 's at end,
And the elements' rage, the fiend-voices that rave,
Shall dwindle, shall blend,
Shall change, shall become first a peace out of pain,
Then a light, then thy breast,
O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee again,
And with God be the rest!

INVOCATION.

From the 'RING AND THE BOOK.'

O lyric Love, half angel and half bird,
And all a wonder and a wild desire—
Boldest of hearts that ever braved the sun,
Took sanctuary within the holier blue,
And sang a kindred soul out to his face—
Yet human at the red-ripe of the heart—
When the first summons from the darkling earth
Reached thee amid thy chambers, blanched their blue,
And bared them of the glory—to drop down,
To toil for man, to suffer or to die—
This is the same voice: can thy soul know change?
Hail then, and hearken from the realms of help!
Never may I commence my song, my due
To God who best taught song by gift of thee,
Except with bent head and beseeching hand—
That still, despite the distance and the dark,
What was, again may be; some interchange
Of grace, some splendour once thy very thought,
Some benediction anciently thy smile;—
Never conclude, but raising hand and head
Thither where eyes, that cannot reach, yet yearn
For all hope, all sustainment, all reward,
Their utmost up and on—so blessing back
In those thy realms of help, that heaven thy home,
Some whiteness, which, I judge, thy face makes proud,
Some wanness where, I think, thy foot may fall.

A WALL.

I.

O THE old wall here! How I could pass
  Life in a long midsummer day,
My feet confined to a plot of grass,
  My eyes from a wall not once away!

II.

And lush and lithe do the creepers clothe
  Yon wall I watch, with a wealth of green:
Its bald red bricks draped, nothing loath,
  In lappets of tangle they laugh between.

III.

Now, what is it makes pulsate the robe?
  Why tremble the sprays? What life o'erbrims
The body—the house no eye can probe—
  Divined as, beneath a robe, the limbs?

IV.

And there again! But my heart may guess
  Who tripped behind; and she sang perhaps;
So the old wall throbbed, and its life's excess
  Died out and away in the leafy wraps!

V.

Wall upon wall are between us; life
  And song should away from heart to heart!
I—prison-bird, with a ruddy strife
  At breast, and a lip whence storm-notes start—

VI.

Hold on, hope hard in the subtle thing
  That 's spirit: though cloistered fast, soar free;
Account as wood, brick, stone, this ring
  Of the rueful neighbours, and—forth to thee!

PRELUDE TO 'DRAMATIC IDYLS.'

(SECOND SERIES.)

'YOU are sick, that 's sure'—they say:
'Sick of what?'—they disagree.
''T is the brain'—thinks Dr. A.,
''T is the heart'—holds Dr. B.,
'The liver—my life I 'd lay!'
'The lungs!' 'The lights!'
Ah me!

So ignorant of man's whole
Of bodily organs plain to see—
So sage and certain, frank and free,
About what 's under lock and key—
Man's soul!

PIPPA PASSES.

A DRAMA.

NEW-YEAR'S DAY AT ASOLO IN THE TREVISAN.—*A large, mean, airy chamber. A girl,* PIPPA, *from the silk-mills, springing out of bed.*

DAY!
Faster and more fast,
O'er night's brim, day boils at last;
Boils, pure gold, o'er the cloud-cup's brim
Where spurting and suppressed it lay:
For not a froth-flake touched the rim
Of yonder gap in the solid gray
Of the eastern cloud, an hour away;
But forth one wavelet, then another, curled,
Till the whole sunrise, not to be suppressed,
Rose, reddened, and its seething breast
Flickered in bounds, grew gold, then overflowed the world.

Oh, Day, if I squander a wavelet of thee,
A mite of my twelve hours' treasure,
The least of thy gazes or glances
(Be they grants thou art bound to, or gifts above measure),
One of thy choices, or one of thy chances
(Be they tasks God imposed thee, or freaks at thy pleasure)—
My Day, if I squander such labour or leisure,
Then shame fall on Asolo, mischief on me!

Thy long blue solemn hours serenely flowing,
Whence earth, we feel, gets steady help and good—

Thy fitful sunshine-minutes, coming, going,
In which earth turns from work in gamesome mood—
All shall be mine! But thou must treat me not
As the prosperous are treated, those who live
At hand here, and enjoy the higher lot,
In readiness to take what thou wilt give,
And free to let alone what thou refusest;
For, Day, my holiday, if thou ill-usest
Me, who am only Pippa—old-year's sorrow,
Cast off last night, will come again to-morrow:
Whereas, if thou prove gentle, I shall borrow
Sufficient strength of thee for new-year's sorrow.
All other men and women that this earth
Belongs to, who all days alike possess,
Make general plenty cure particular dearth,
Get more joy one way, if another less:
Thou art my single day God lends to leaven
What were all earth else with a feel of heaven;
Sole light that helps me through the year, thy sun's!
Try, now! Take Asolo's Four Happiest Ones—
And let thy morning rain on that superb
Great haughty Ottima, can rain disturb
Her Sebald's homage? All the while thy rain
Beats fiercest on her shrub-house window-pane,
He will but press the closer, breathe more warm
Against her cheek; how should she mind the storm?
And, morning past, if midday shed a gloom
O'er Jules and Phene, what care bride and groom
Save for their dear selves? 'T is their marriage-day;
And while they leave church, and go home their way
Hand clasping hand, within each breast would be
Sunbeams and pleasant weather spite of thee.
Then, for another trial, obscure thy eve
With mist, will Luigi and his mother grieve—
The lady and her child, unmatched, forsooth,

She in her age, as Luigi in his youth,
For true content? The cheerful town, warm, close,
And safe, the sooner that thou art morose,
Receives them! And yet once again, outbreak
In storm at night on Monsignor they make
Such stir about—whom they expect from Rome
To visit Asolo, his brothers' home,
And say here masses proper to release
A soul from pain—what storm dares hurt his peace?
Calm would he pray, with his own thoughts to ward
Thy thunder off, nor want the angels' guard.
But Pippa—just one such mischance would spoil
Her day that lightens the next twelvemonth's toil
At wearisome silk-winding, coil on coil!
  And here I let time slip for nought!
Aha, you foolhardy sunbeam, caught
With a single splash from my ewer!
You that would mock the best pursuer,
Was my basin overdeep?
One splash of water ruins you asleep,
And up, up, fleet your brilliant bits
Wheeling and counterwheeling,
Reeling, broken beyond healing—
Now grow together on the ceiling!
That will task your wits.
Whoever it was quenched fire first, hoped to see
Morsel after morsel flee
As merrily, as giddily—
Meantime, what lights my sunbeam on?
Where settles by degrees the radiant cripple?
Oh, is it surely blown, my martagon?
New-blown and ruddy as Saint Agnes' nipple,
Plump as the flesh-bunch on some Turk bird's poll!
Be sure if corals, branching 'neath the ripple
Of ocean, bud there, fairies watch unroll

Such turban-flowers; I say, such lamps disperse
Thick red flame through that dusk green universe!
I am queen of thee, floweret;
And each fleshy blossom
Preserve I not—safer
Than leaves that embower it,
Or shells that embosom—
From weevil and chafer?
Laugh through my pane, then; solicit the bee;
Gibe him, be sure; and, in midst of thy glee,
Love thy queen, worship me!

Worship whom else? For am I not, this day,
Whate'er I please? What shall I please to-day?
My morning, noon, eve, night—how spend my day?
To-morrow I must be Pippa who winds silk,
The whole year round, to earn just bread and milk:
But, this one day, I have leave to go,
And play out my fancy's fullest games;
I may fancy all day—and it shall be so—
That I taste of the pleasures, am called by the names
Of the Happiest Four in our Asolo!

See! Up the hill-side yonder, through the morning,
Some one shall love me, as the world calls love:
I am no less than Ottima, take warning!
The gardens, and the great stone house above,
And other house for shrubs, all glass in front,
Are mine; where Sebald steals, as he is wont,
To court me, while old Luca yet reposes;
And therefore, till the shrub-house door uncloses,
I—what now?—give abundant cause for prate
About me—Ottima, I mean—of late,
Too bold, too confident she 'll still face down
The spitefullest of talkers in our town—
How we talk in the little town below!

But love, love, love—there 's better love, I know!
This foolish love was only Day's first offer;
I choose my next love to defy the scoffer:
For do not our Bride and Bridegroom sally
Out of Possagno church at noon?
Their house looks over Orcana valley—
Why should I not be the bride as soon
As Ottima? For I saw, beside,
Arrive last night that little bride—
Saw, if you call it seeing her, one flash
Of the pale, snow-pure cheek and black bright tresses,
Blacker than all except the black eyelash;
I wonder she contrives those lids no dresses!
So strict was she, the veil
Should cover close her pale
Pure cheeks—a bride to look at and scarce touch,
Scarce touch, remember, Jules!—for are not such
Used to be tended, flower-like, every feature,
As if one's breath would fray the lily of a creature?
A soft and easy life these ladies lead!
Whiteness in us were wonderful indeed.
Oh, save that brow its virgin dimness,
Keep that foot its lady primness,
Let those ankles never swerve
From their exquisite reserve,
Yet have to trip along the streets like me,
All but naked to the knee!
How will she ever grant her Jules a bliss
So startling as her real first infant kiss?
Oh, no—not envy, this!
Not envy, sure!—for if you gave me
Leave to take or to refuse,
In earnest, do you think I 'd choose
That sort of new love to enslave me?
Mine should have lapped me round from the beginning,

As little fear of losing it as winning;
Lovers grow cold, men learn to hate their wives,
And only parents' love can last our lives.
At eve the Son and Mother, gentle pair,
Commune inside our turret; what prevents
My being Luigi? While that mossy lair
Of lizards through the winter-time, is stirred
With each to each imparting sweet intents
For this new year, as brooding bird to bird
(For I observe of late, the evening walk
Of Luigi and his mother always ends
Inside our ruined turret, where they talk,
Calmer than lovers, yet more kind than friends),
Let me be cared about, kept out of harm,
And schemed for, safe in love as with a charm;
Let me be Luigi!—If I only knew
What was my mother's face—my father, too!

Nay, if you come to that, best love of all
Is God's; then why not have God's love befall
Myself as, in the palace by the Dome,
Monsignor?—who to-night will bless the home
Of his dead brother; and God will bless in turn
That heart which beats, those eyes which mildly burn
With love for all men! I, to-night at least,
Would be that holy and beloved priest.

Now wait!—even I already seem to share
In God's love: what does New-Year's hymn declare?
What other meaning do these verses bear?

All service ranks the same with God.
If now, as formerly he trod
Paradise, his presence fills
Our earth, each only as God wills

Can work—God's puppets, best and worst,
Are we; there is no last nor first.

Say not 'a small event!' Why 'small?'
Costs it more pain that this ye call
A 'great event' should come to pass,
Than that? Untwine me from the mass
Of deeds which make up life one deed
Power shall fall short in or exceed!

And more of it and more of it!—oh, yes—
I will pass each, and see their happiness,
And envy none—being just as great, no doubt,
Useful to men, and dear to God, as they!
A pretty thing to care about
So mightily, this single holiday!
But let the sun shine! Wherefore repine?
With thee to lead me, O Day of mine,
Down the grass-path gray with dew,
Under the pine-wood blind with boughs,
Where the swallow never flew
Nor yet cicala dared carouse—
No, dared carouse! [*She enters the street.*

I.—MORNING. *Up the Hill-side, inside the Shrub-house.* LUCA'S *Wife,* OTTIMA, *and her Paramour, the German* SEBALD.

Sebald [*sings.*] *Let the watching lids wink!*
Day 's a-blaze with eyes, think—
Deep into the night, drink!

Ottima. Night? Such may be your Rhineland nights, perhaps;
But this blood-red beam through the shutter's chink—
We call such light the morning's: let us see!
Mind how you grope your way, though! How these tall
Naked geraniums straggle! Push the lattice

Behind that frame!—Nay, do I bid you?—Sebald,
It shakes the dust down on me! Why, of course
The slide-bolt catches.—Well, are you content,
Or must I find you something else to spoil?
Kiss and be friends, my Sebald! Is it full morning?
Oh, don't speak then!
Sebald. Ay, thus it used to be!
Ever your house was, I remember, shut
Till midday; I observed that, as I strolled
On mornings thro' the vale here: country girls
Were noisy, washing garments in the brook,
Hinds drove the slow white oxen up the hills;
But no, your house was mute, would ope no eye!
And wisely; you were plotting one thing there,
Nature another outside. I looked up—
Rough white wood shutters, rusty iron bars,
Silent as death, blind in a flood of light.
Oh, I remember!—and the peasants laughed
And said, 'The old man sleeps with the young wife!'
This house was his, this chair, this window—his!
Ottima. Ah, the clear morning! I can see Saint Mark's;
That black streak is the belfry. Stop: Vicenza
Should lie—there 's Padua, plain enough, that blue!
Look o'er my shoulder, follow my finger!
Sebald. Morning?
It seems to me a night with a sun added.
Where 's dew, where 's freshness? That bruised plant, I bruised
In getting thro' the lattice yester-eve,
Droops as it did. See, here 's my elbow's mark
I' the dust o' the sill.
Ottima. Oh, shut the lattice, pray!
Sebald. Let me lean out. I cannot scent blood here,
Foul as the morn may be.
There, shut the world out!

How do you feel now, Ottima? There, curse
The world, and all outside! Let us throw off
This mask: how do you bear yourself? Let 's out
With all of it!
Ottima. Best never speak of it.
Sebald. Best speak again and yet again of it,
Till words cease to be more than words. 'His blood,'
For instance—let those two words mean 'His blood'
And nothing more. Notice, I 'll say them now,
'His blood.'
Ottima. Assuredly if I repented
The deed—
Sebald. Repent? who should repent, or why?
What puts that in your head? Did I once say
That I repented?
Ottima. No, I said the deed—
Sebald. 'The deed' and 'the event'—just now it was
'Our passion's fruit'—the devil take such cant!
Say, once and always, Luca was a wittol,
I am his cut-throat, you are—
Ottima. Here 's the wine;
I brought it when we left the house above,
And glasses too—wine of both sorts. Black? white then?
Sebald. But am not I his cut-throat? What are you?
Ottima. There trudges on his business from the Duomo
Benet the Capuchin, with his brown hood
And bare feet—always in one place at church,
Close under the stone wall by the south entry;
I used to take him for a brown cold piece
Of the wall's self, as out of it he rose
To let me pass—at first, I say, I used—
Now, so has that dumb figure fastened on me,
rather should account the plastered wall
ece of him, so chilly does it strike.
Sebald?

Sebald. No, the white wine—the white wine!
Well, Ottima, I promised no new year
Should rise on us the ancient shameful way,
Nor does it rise: pour on! To your black eyes!
Do you remember last damned New-Year's day?

Ottima. You brought those foreign prints. We looked at them
Over the wine and fruit. I had to scheme
To get him from the fire. Nothing but saying
His own set wants the proof-mark, roused him up
To hunt them out.

Sebald. Hark you, Ottima,
One thing 's to guard against. We 'll not make much
One of the other—that is, not make more
Parade of warmth, childish officious coil,
Than yesterday—as if, sweet, I supposed
Proof upon proof were needed now, now first,
To show I love you—yes, still love you—love you
In spite of Luca and what 's come to him—
Sure sign we had him ever in our thoughts,
White sneering old reproachful face and all!
We 'll even quarrel, love, at times, as if
We still could lose each other, were not tied
By this—conceive you?

Ottima. Love!

Sebald. Not tied so sure!
Because tho' I was wrought upon, have struck
His insolence back into him—am I
So surely yours?—therefore, forever yours?

Ottima. Love, to be wise (one counsel pays another),
Should we have—months ago, when first we loved,
For instance that May morning we two stole
Under the green ascent of sycamores—
If we had come upon a thing like that
Suddenly—

Sebald. 'A thing'—there again—'a thing!'
Ottima. Then, Venus' body, had we come upon
My husband Luca Gaddi's murdered corpse
Within there, at his couch-foot, covered close—
Would you have pored upon it? Why persist
In poring now upon it? For 't is here
As much as there in the deserted house—
You cannot rid your eyes of it. For me,
Now he is dead I hate him worse; I hate—
Dare you stay here? I would go back and hold
His two dead hands, and say, 'I hate you worse,
Luca, than'—
Sebald. Off, off—take your hands off mine!
'T is the hot evening—off! oh, morning, is it?
Ottima. There 's one thing must be done—you know what thing.
Come in and help to carry. We may sleep
Anywhere in the whole wide house to-night.
Sebald. What would come, think you, if we let him lie
Just as he is? Let him lie there until
The angels take him! He is turned by this
Off from his face beside, as you will see.
Ottima. This dusty pane might serve for looking-glass.
Three, four—four gray hairs! Is it so you said
A plait of hair should wave across my neck?
No—this way.
Sebald. Ottima, I would give your neck,
Each splendid shoulder, both those breasts of yours,
That this were undone! Killing! Kill the world
So Luca lives again!—ay, lives to sputter
His fulsome dotage on you—yes, and feign
Surprise that I return at eve to sup,
When all the morning I was loitering here—
Bid me dispatch my business and begone.
I would—

Ottima. See!
Sebald. No, I 'll finish! Do you think
I fear to speak the bare truth once for all?
All we have talked of is, at bottom, fine
To suffer; there 's a recompense in guilt;
One must be venturous and fortunate:
What is one young for, else? In age we 'll sigh
O'er the wild, reckless, wicked days flown over;
Still we have lived: the vice was in its place.
But to have eaten Luca's bread, have worn
His clothes, have felt his money swell my purse—
Do lovers in romances sin that way?
Why, I was starving when I used to call
And teach you music, starving while you plucked me
These flowers to smell!
Ottima. My poor lost friend!
Sebald. He gave me
Life, nothing less; what if he did reproach
My perfidy, and threaten, and do more—
Had he no right? What was to wonder at?
He sat by us at table quietly—
Why must you lean across till our cheeks touch'd?
Could he do less than make pretence to strike?
'T is not the crime's sake—I 'd commit ten crimes
Greater, to have this crime wiped out, undone!
And you—O, how feel you? feel you for me?
Ottima. Well then, I love you better now than ever,
And best—look at me while I speak to you—
Best for the crime; nor do I grieve, in truth,
This mask, this simulated ignorance,
This affectation of simplicity,
Falls off our crime; this naked crime of ours
May not, now, be looked over—look it down!
Great? let it be great; but the joys it brought,
Pay they or no its price? Come: they or it!

Speak not! The past, would you give up the past
Such as it is, pleasure and crime together?
Give up that noon I owned my love for you?
The garden's silence! even the single bee
Persisting in his toil suddenly stopped,
And where he hid you only could surmise
By some campanula's chalice set a-swing:
Who stammered, 'Yes, I love you'?
And when I ventured to receive you here,
Made you steal hither in the mornings—
Sebald. When
I used to look up 'neath the shrub-house here,
Till the red fire on its glazed windows spread
To a yellow haze?
Ottima. Ah—my sign was, the sun
Inflamed the sere side of yon chestnut-tree
Nipped by the first frost.
Sebald. You would always laugh
At my wet boots: I had to stride thro' grass
Over my ankles.
Ottima. Then our crowning night!
Sebald. The July night?
Ottima. The day of it too, Sebald!
When heaven's pillars seemed o'erbowed with heat,
Its black-blue canopy suffered descend
Close on us both, to weigh down each to each,
And smother up all life except our life.
So lay we till the storm came.
Sebald. How it came!
Ottima. Buried in woods we lay, you recollect;
Swift ran the searching tempest overhead;
And ever and anon some bright white shaft
Burned thro' the pine-tree roof—here burned and there,
As if God's messenger thro' the close wood screen
Plunged and replunged his weapon at a venture,

Feeling for guilty thee and me: then broke
The thunder like a whole sea overhead—
Sebald. Slower, Ottima—
Ottima. Sebald, as we lay,
Who said, 'Let death come now! 't is right to die!
Right to be punished! nought completes such bliss
But woe!' Who said that?
Sebald. How did we ever rise?
Was 't that we slept? Why did it end?
Ottima. I felt you,
Fresh tapering to a point the ruffled ends
Of my loose locks 'twixt both your humid lips—
My hair is fallen now: knot it again!
Sebald. I kiss you now, dear Ottima, now, and now!
This way? Will you forgive me—be once more
My great queen?
Ottima. Bind it thrice about my brow;
Crown me your queen, your spirit's arbitress,
Magnificent in sin. Say that!
Sebald. I crown you
My great white queen, my spirit's arbitress,
Magnificent—

(*From without is heard the voice of* PIPPA *singing*)

The year 's at the spring,
And day 's at the morn;
Morning 's at seven;
The hill-side 's dew-pearled:
The lark 's on the wing;
The snail 's on the thorn;
God 's in his heaven—
All 's right with the world!

(PIPPA *passes.*)

Sebald. God 's in his heaven! Do you hear that? Who spoke?
You, you spoke!

Ottima. Oh—that little ragged girl!
She must have rested on the step: we give them
But this one holiday the whole year round.
Did you ever see our silk-mills—their inside?
There are ten silk-mills now belong to you.
She stoops to pick my double heart's-ease—Sh!
She does not hear: call you out louder!

Sebald. Leave me!
Go, get your clothes on—dress those shoulders!

Ottima. Sebald!

Sebald. Wipe off that paint! I hate you!

Ottima. Miserable!

Sebald. My God! and she is emptied of it now!
Outright now!—how miraculously gone
All of the grace—had she not strange grace once?
Why, the blank cheek hangs listless as it likes,
No purpose holds the features up together,
Only the cloven brow and puckered chin
Stay in their places; and the very hair,
That seemed to have a sort of life in it,
Drops, a dead web!—

Ottima. Speak to me—not of me!

Sebald. That round great full-orbed face, where not an angle
Broke the delicious indolence—all broken!

Ottima. To me—not of me! Ungrateful, perjured cheat!
A coward, too—but ingrate 's worse than all!
Beggar—my slave—a fawning, cringing lie!
Leave me! betray me! I can see your drift!
A lie that walks and eats and drinks!

Sebald. My God!
Those morbid, olive, faultless shoulder-blades—
I should have known there was no blood beneath!

Ottima. You hate me, then? You hate me, then?

Sebald. To think

She would succeed in her absurd attempt,
And fascinate by sinning, show herself
Superior—guilt from its excess superior
To innocence. That little peasant's voice
Has righted all again. Though I be lost,
I know which is the better, never fear,
Of vice or virtue, purity or lust,
Nature or trick! I see what I have done,
Entirely now! Oh, I am proud to feel
Such torments—let the world take credit thence—
I, having done my deed, pay too its price!
I hate, hate—curse you! God 's in his heaven!

Ottima. Me!
Me! no, no, Sebald, not yourself—kill me!
Mine is the whole crime. Do but kill me—then
Yourself—then—presently—first hear me speak!
I always meant to kill myself—wait, you!
Lean on my breast—not as a breast; do n't love me
The more because you lean on me, my own
Heart's Sebald! There, there, both deaths presently!

Sebald. My brain is drowned now—quite drowned: all I feel
Is—is, at swift-recurring intervals,
A hurry-down within me, as of waters
Loosened to smother up some ghastly pit:
There they go—whirls from a black, fiery sea!

Ottima. Not me—to him, O God, be merciful!

Talk by the way, while PIPPA *is passing from the Hill-side to Orcana. Foreign Students of Painting and Sculpture, from Venice, assembled opposite the House of* JULES, *a young French Statuary, at Possagno.*

1st Student. Attention! my own post is beneath this window, but the pomegranate clump yonder will hide three or four of you with a little squeezing, and Schramm and his

pipe must lie flat in the balcony. Four, five—who 's a defaulter? We want everybody, for Jules must not be suffered to hurt his bride when the jest 's found out.

2d Student. All here! Only our poet 's away—never having much meant to be present, moonstrike him! The airs of that fellow, that Giovacchino! He was in violent love with himself, and had a fair prospect of thriving in his suit, so unmolested was it,—when suddenly a woman falls in love with him, too; and out of pure jealousy he takes himself off to Trieste, immortal poem and all—whereto is this prophetical epitaph appended already, as Bluphocks assures me—'*Here a mammoth-poem lies, Fouled to death by butterflies.*' His own fault, the simpleton! Instead of cramp couplets, each like a knife in your entrails, he should write, says Bluphocks, both classically and intelligibly.—*Æsculapius, an Epic. Catalogue of the drugs: Hebe's plaister—One strip Cools your lip. Phœbus' emulsion—One bottle Clears your throttle. Mercury's bolus—One box Cures—*

3d Student. Subside, my fine fellow! If the marriage was over by ten o'clock, Jules will certainly be here in a minute with his bride.

2d Student. Good!—Only, so should the poet's muse have been universally acceptable, says Bluphocks, *et canibus nostris*—and Delia not better known to our literary dogs than the boy Giovacchino!

1st Student. To the point, now. Where 's Gottlieb, the new-comer? Oh,—listen, Gottlieb, to what has called down this piece of friendly vengeance on Jules, of which we now assemble to witness the winding-up. We are all agreed, all in a tale, observe, when Jules shall burst out on us in a fury by and by: I am spokesman—the verses that are to undeceive Jules bear my name of Lutwyche—but each professes himself alike insulted by this strutting stone-squarer, who came alone from Paris to Munich, and thence with a crowd of us to Venice and Possagno here, but proceeds in a day

or two alone again—oh, alone indubitably!—to Rome and Florence. He, forsooth, take up his portion with these dissolute, brutalized, heartless bunglers!—so he was heard to call us all: now, is Schramm brutalized, I should like to know? Am I heartless?

Gottlieb. Why, somewhat heartless; for, suppose Jules a coxcomb as much as you choose, still, for this mere coxcombry, you will have brushed off—what do folks style it?—the bloom of his life. Is it too late to alter? These love-letters, now, you call his—I can 't laugh at them.

4th Student. Because you never read the sham letters of our inditing which drew forth these.

Gottlieb. His discovery of the truth will be frightful.

4th Student. That 's the joke. But you should have joined us at the beginning: there 's no doubt he loves the girl—loves a model he might hire by the hour!

Gottlieb. See here! 'He has been accustomed,' he writes, 'to have Canova's women about him in stone, and the world's women beside him in flesh; these being as much below, as those above, his soul's aspiration; but now he is to have the reality.'—There you laugh again! I say, you wipe off the very dew of his youth.

1st Student. Schramm! (Take the pipe out of his mouth, somebody)—will Jules lose the bloom of his youth?

Schramm. Nothing worth keeping is ever lost in this world: look at a blossom—it drops presently, having done its service and lasted its time; but fruits succeed, and where would be the blossom's place could it continue? As well affirm that your eye is no longer in your body, because its earliest favourite, whatever it may have first loved to look on, is dead and done with—as that any affection is lost to the soul when its first object, whatever happened first to satisfy it, is superseded in due course. Keep but ever looking, whether with the body's eye or the mind's, and you will soon find something to look on! Has a man done wondering at women?—there

follow men, dead and alive, to wonder at. Has he done wondering at men?—there's God to wonder at: and the faculty of wonder may be, at the same time, old and tired enough with respect to its first object, and yet young and fresh sufficiently, so far as concerns its novel one. Thus— 78

1st Student. Put Schramm's pipe into his mouth again! There, you see: Well, this Jules—a wretched fribble—oh, I watched his disportings at Possagno, the other day! Canova's gallery—you know: there he marches first resolvedly past great works by the dozen without vouchsafing an eye; all at once he stops full at the *Psiche-fanciulla*—cannot pass that old acquaintance without a nod of encouragement—'In your new place, beauty? Then behave yourself as well here as at Munich—I see you!' Next he posts himself deliberately before the unfinished *Pietà* for half an hour without moving, till up he starts of a sudden, and thrusts his very nose into—I say, into—the group; by which gesture you are informed that precisely the sole point he had not fully mastered in Canova's practice was a certain method of using the drill in the articulation of the knee-joint—and that, likewise, has he mastered at length! Good-bye, therefore, to poor Canova—whose gallery no longer need detain his successor Jules, the predestinated novel thinker in marble! 97

5th Student. Tell him about the women; go on to the women!

1st Student. Why, on that matter he could never be supercilious enough. How should we be other (he said) than the poor devils you see, with those debasing habits we cherish? He was not to wallow in that mire, at least; he would wait, and love only at the proper time, and meanwhile put up with the *Psiche-fanciulla.* Now I happened to hear of a young Greek—real Greek girl at Malamocco; a true Islander, do you see, with Alciphron's 'hair like sea-moss'—Schramm knows!—white and quiet as an apparition, and

fourteen years old at farthest,—a daughter of Natalia, so she swears—that hag Natalia, who helps us to models at three *lire* an hour. We selected this girl for the heroine of our jest. So, first, Jules received a scented letter—somebody had seen his Tydeus at the Academy, and my picture was nothing to it: a profound admirer bade him persevere—would make herself known to him ere long. (Paolina my little friend of the *Fenice*, transcribes divinely.) And in due time, the mysterious correspondent gave certain hints of her peculiar charms—the pale cheeks, the black hair—whatever, in short, had struck us in our Malamocco model: we retained her name, too—Phene, which is by interpretation sea-eagle. Now, think of Jules finding himself distinguished from the herd of us by such a creature! In his very first answer he proposed marrying his monitress: and fancy us over these letters, two, three times a day, to receive and dispatch! I concocted the main of it: relations were in the way—secrecy must be observed—in fine, would he wed her on trust, and only speak to her when they were indissolubly united? St—st—Here they come!

6th Student. Both of them! Heaven's love, speak softly, speak within yourselves!

5th Student. Look at the bridegroom! Half his hair in storm, and half in calm,—patted down over the left temple,—like a frothy cup one blows on to cool it! and the same old blouse that he murders the marble in!

2d Student. Not a rich vest like yours, Hannibal Scratchy!—rich, that your face may the better set it off!

6th Student. And the bride! Yes, sure enough, our Phene! Should you have known her in her clothes? How magnificently pale!

Gottlieb. She does not also take it for earnest, I hope?

1st Student. Oh, Natalia's concern, that is! We settle with Natalia.

6th Student. She does not speak—has evidently let out r

word. The only thing is, will she equally remember the rest of her lesson, and repeat correctly all those verses which are to break the secret to Jules?

Gottlieb. How he gazes on her! Pity—pity!

1st Student. They go in: now, silence! You three,—not nearer the window, mind, than that pomegranate—just where the little girl, who a few minutes ago passed us singing, is seated!

II.—NOON. *Over Orcana. The House of* JULES, *who crosses its threshold with* PHENE: *she is silent, on which* JULES *begins.*

Do not die, Phene! I am yours now, you
Are mine now; let Fate reach me how she likes,
If you'll not die: so, never die! Sit here—
My work-room's single seat: I over-lean
This length of hair and lustrous front; they turn
Like an entire flower upward: eyes, lips, last
Your chin—no, last your throat turns: 't is their scent
Pulls down my face upon you! Nay, look ever
This one way till I change, grow you—I could
Change into you, beloved!
                                        You by me,
And I by you; this is your hand in mine,
And side by side we sit: all 's true. Thank God!
I have spoken: speak, you!
                                        Oh, my life to come!
My Tydeus must be carved that 's there in clay;
Yet how be carved, with you about the room?
Where must I place you? When I think that once
This roomful of rough block-work seemed my heaven
Without you! Shall I ever work again,
Get fairly into my old ways again,
Bid each conception stand while, trait by trait,
My hand transfers its lineaments to stone?
Will my mere fancies live near you, their truth—

The live truth, passing and repassing me,
Sitting beside me?
Now speak!
Only, first,
See, all your letters! Was 't not well contrived?
Their hiding-place is Psyche's robe; she keeps
Your letters next her skin: which drops out foremost?
Ah,—this that swam down like a first moonbeam
Into my world!
Again those eyes complete
Their melancholy survey, sweet and slow,
Of all my room holds; to return and rest
On me, with pity, yet some wonder too:
As if God bade some spirit plague a world,
And this were the one moment of surprise
And sorrow while she took her station, pausing
O'er what she sees, finds good, and must destroy!
What gaze you at? Those? Books, I told you of;
Let your first word to me rejoice them, too:
This minion, a Coluthus, writ in red
Bistre and azure by Bessarion's scribe—
Read this line—no, shame—Homer's be the Greek
First breathed me from the lips of my Greek girl!
My Odyssey in coarse black vivid type
With faded yellow blossoms 'twixt page and page,
To mark great places with due gratitude:
'*He said, and on Antinous directed*
A bitter shaft'—a flower blots out the rest!
Again upon your search? My statues, then!—
Ah, do not mind that—better that will look
When cast in bronze—an Almaign Kaiser, that,
Swart-green and gold, with truncheon based on hip.
This, rather, turn to! What, unrecognized?
I thought you would have seen that here you sit
As I imagined you—Hippolyta,

Naked upon her bright Numidian horse.
Recall you this, then? 'Carve in bold relief'—
So you commanded—'carve, against I come,
A Greek, in Athens, as our fashion was,
Feasting, bay-filleted and thunder-free,
Who rises 'neath the lifted myrtle-branch.
"Praise those who slew Hipparchus," cry the guests,
"While o'er thy head the singer's myrtle waves
As erst above our champion: stand up, all!"'
See, I have laboured to express your thought.
Quite round, a cluster of mere hands and arms
(Thrust in all senses, all ways, from all sides,
Only consenting at the branches' end
They strain toward) serves for frame to a sole face,
The Praiser's, in the centre, who with eyes
Sightless, so bend they back to light inside
His brain where visionary forms throng up,
Sings, minding not that palpitating arch
Of hands and arms, nor the quick drip of wine
From the drenched leaves o'erhead, nor crowns cast off,
Violet and parsley crowns to trample on—
Sings, pausing as the patron-ghosts approve,
Devoutly their unconquerable hymn!
But you must say a 'well' to that—say, 'well!'
Because you gaze—am I fantastic, sweet?
Gaze like my very life's-stuff, marble—marbly
Even to the silence! why before I found
The real flesh Phene, I inured myself
To see, throughout all nature, varied stuff
For better nature's birth by means of art:
With me, each substance tended to one form
Of beauty—to the human archetype.
On every side occurred suggestive germs
Of that—the tree, the flower—or take the fruit,—
Some rosy shape, continuing the peach,

Curved beewise o'er its bough; as rosy limbs,
Depending, nestled in the leaves; and just
From a cleft rose-peach the whole Dryad sprang!
But of the stuffs one can be master of,
How I divined their capabilities!
From the soft-rinded smoothening facile chalk
That yields your outline to the air's embrace,
Half-softened by a halo's pearly gloom,
Down to the crisp imperious steel, so sure
To cut its one confided thought clean out
Of all the world. But marble!—'neath my tools
More pliable than jelly—as it were
Some clear primordial creature dug from depths
In the earth's heart, where itself breeds itself,
And whence all baser substance may be worked—
Refine it off to air you may, condense it
Down to the diamond;—is not metal there,
When o'er the sudden specks my chisel trips?
Not flesh, as flake off flake I scale, approach,
Lay bare those bluish veins of blood asleep?
Lurks flame in no strange windings where, surprised
By the swift implement sent home at once,
Flushes and glowings radiate and hover
About its track?—
Phene! what—why is this?
That whitening cheek, those still-dilating eyes!
Ah, you will die—I knew that you would die!

PHENE *begins, on his having long remained silent.*

Now the end 's coming; to be sure, it must
Have ended sometime! Tush, why need I speak
Their foolish speech? I cannot bring to mind
One half of it, beside, and do not care
For old Natalia now, nor any of them.
Oh, you—what are you?—if I do not try

To say the words Natalia made me learn,
To please your friends,—it is to keep myself
Where your voice lifted me, by letting that
Proceed; but can it? Even you, perhaps,
Cannot take up, now you have once let fall,
The music's life, and me along with that—
No, or you would! We 'll stay, then, as we are—
Above the world.
You creature with the eyes!
If I could look forever up to them,
As now you let me, I believe, all sin,
All memory of wrong done, suffering borne,
Would drop down, low and lower, to the earth
Whence all that 's low comes, and there touch and stay—
Never to overtake the rest of me,
All that, unspotted, reaches up to you,
Drawn by those eyes! What rises is myself,
Not me the shame and suffering; but they sink,
Are left, I rise above them. Keep me so
Above the world!
But you sink, for your eyes
Are altering—altered! Stay—'I love you, love—'
I could prevent it if I understood
More of your words to me—was 't in the tone
Or the words, your power?
Or stay—I will repeat
Their speech, if that contents you! Only, change
No more, and I shall find it presently
Far back here, in the brain yourself filled up.
Natalia threatened me that harm would follow
Unless I spoke their lesson to the end,
But harm to me, I thought she meant, not you.
Your friends—Natalia said they were your friends
And meant you well—because, I doubted it,
Observing (what was very strange to see)

On every face, so different in all else,
The same smile girls like me are used to bear,
But never men, men cannot stoop so low;
Yet your friends, speaking of you, used that smile,
That hateful smirk of boundless self-conceit
Which seems to take possession of the world
And make of God their tame confederate,
Purveyor to their appetites—you know!
But still Natalia said they were your friends,
And they assented though they smiled the more,
And all came round me—that thin Englishman
With light, lank hair seemed leader of the rest;
He held a paper—'What we want,' said he,
Ending some explanation to his friends,
'Is something slow, involved, and mystical,
To hold Jules long in doubt, yet take his taste
And lure him on until at innermost
Where he seeks sweetness' soul, he may find—this!
As in the apple's core the noisome fly;
For insects on the rind are seen at once,
And brushed aside as soon, but this is found
Only when on the lips or loathing tongue.'
And so he read what I have got by heart:
I'll speak it,—'Do not die, love! I am yours'—
No—is not that, or like that, part of words
Yourself began by speaking? Strange to lose
What cost much pains to learn! Is this more right?

I am a painter who cannot paint;
In my life, a devil rather than saint,
In my brain, as poor a creature too—
No end to all I cannot do!
Yet do one thing at least I can—
Love a man, or hate a man
Supremely: thus my lore began.

Through the Valley of Love I went,
In its lovingest spot to abide,
And just on the verge where I pitched my tent,
I found Hate dwelling beside.
(Let the Bridegroom ask what the painter meant
Of his Bride, of the peerless Bride!)
And further, I traversed Hate's Grove,
In its hatefullest nook to dwell;
But lo, where I flung myself prone, couched Love
Where the shadow threefold fell!
(The meaning—those black bride's-eyes above,
Not the painter's lip should tell!)

'And here,' said he, 'Jules probably will ask,
You have black eyes, love—you are, sure enough,
My peerless bride,—then do you tell, indeed,
What needs some explanation—what means this?'—
And I am to go on, without a word—

So I grew wise in Love and Hate,
From simple that I was of late.
Once, when I loved, I would enlace
Breast, eyelids, hands, feet, form, and face
Of her I loved, in one embrace—
As if by mere love I could love immensely!
And when I hated, I would plunge
My sword, and wipe with the first lunge
My foe's whole life out like a sponge—
As if by mere hate I could hate intensely!
But now I am wiser, know better the fashion
How passion seeks aid from its opposite passion;
And if I see cause to love more, or hate more
Than ever man loved, ever hated, before—
And seek in the Valley of Love
The nest, or the nook in Hate's Grove,

Where my soul may surely reach
The essence, nought less, of each,
The Hate of all Hates, the Love
Of all Loves, in the Valley or Grove—
I find them the very warders
Each of the other's borders.
When I love most, Love is disguised
In Hate; and when Hate is surprised
In Love, then I hate most: ask
How Love smiles through Hate's iron casque,
Hate grins through Love's rose-braided mask,—
And how, having hated thee,
I sought long and painfully
To reach thy heart, nor prick
The skin, but pierce to the quick—
Ask this, my Jules, and be answered straight
By thy bride—how the painter Lutwyche can hate!

JULES *interposes.*

Lutwyche! who else? But all of them, no doubt,
Hated me: they at Venice—presently
Their turn, however! You I shall not meet:
If I dreamed, saying this would wake me!
Keep
What 's here, the gold—we cannot meet again,
Consider—and the money was but meant
For two years' travel, which is over now,
All chance or hope or care or need of it.
This—and what comes from selling these, my casts
And books and medals, except—let them go
Together, so the produce keeps you safe
Out of Natalia's clutches!—If by chance
(For all 's chance here) I should survive the gang
At Venice, root out all fifteen of them,
We might meet somewhere, since the world is wide.
(*From without is heard the voice of* PIPPA, *singing*

[illegible] her [illegible]

[illegible] her [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] all this [illegible]

[illegible] her [illegible]

(PIPPA [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] renounce

[illegible]

The blessing or the blest one, queen or page,
Why should we always choose the page's part?
Here is a woman with utter need of me,—
I find myself queen here, it seems!
How strange!
Look at the woman here with the new soul,
Like my own Psyche,—fresh upon her lips
Alit the visionary butterfly,
Waiting my word to enter and make bright,
Or flutter off and leave all blank as first.
This body had no soul before, but slept
Or stirred, was beauteous or ungainly, free
From taint or foul with stain, as outward things
Fastened their image on its passiveness;
Now, it will wake, feel, live—or die again!
Shall to produce form out of unshaped stuff
Be art—and, further, to evoke a soul
From form be nothing? This new soul is mine!

Now, to kill Lutwyche, what would that do?—save
A wretched dauber, men will hoot to death
Without me, from their laughter!—Oh, to hear
God's voice plain as I heard it first, before
They broke in with their laughter! I heard them
Henceforth, not God!
To Ancona—Greece—some isle!
I wanted silence only! there is clay
Everywhere. One may do whate'er one likes
In art; the only thing is, to make sure
That one does like it—which takes pains to know.
Scatter all this, my Phene—this mad dream!
Who, what is Lutwyche, what Natalia's friends,
What the whole world except our love—my own,
Own Phene? But I told you, did I not,
Ere night we travel for your land—some isle

With the sea's silence on it? Stand aside—
I do but break these paltry models up
To begin art afresh. Meet Lutwyche, I—
And save him from my statue meeting him?
Some unsuspected isle in the far seas!
Like a god going thro' his world there stands
One mountain for a moment in the dusk,
Whole brotherhoods of cedars on its brow;
And you are ever by me while I gaze—
Are in my arms as now—as now—as now!
Some unsuspected isle in the far seas!
Some unsuspected isle in far-off seas!

Talk by the way, while PIPPA *is passing from Orcana to the Turret. Two or three of the Austrian Police loitering with* BLUPHOCKS, *an English vagabond, just in view of the Turret.*

*Bluphocks.** So that is your Pippa, the little girl who passed us singing? Well, your Bishop's Intendant's money shall be honestly earned:—now, do n't make me that sour face because I bring the Bishop's name into the business: we know he can have nothing to do with such horrors; we know that he is a saint and all that a bishop should be, who is a great man besides. *Oh! were but every worm a maggot, Every fly a grig, Every bough a Christmas fagot, Every tune a jig!* In fact, I have abjured all religions; but the last I inclined to was the Armenian: for I have travelled, do you see, and at Koenigsberg, Prussia Improper (so styled because there 's a sort of bleak hungry sun there), you might remark over a venerable house-porch a certain Chaldee inscription; and brief as it is, a mere glance at it used absolutely to change the mood of every bearded passenger. In they turned, one and all; the young and light-

* "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

some, with no irreverent pause, the aged and decrepit, with a sensible alacrity—'t was the Grand Rabbi's abode, in short. Struck with curiosity, I lost no time in learning Syriac (these are vowels, you dogs,—follow my stick's end in the mud—*Celarent, Darii, Ferio!*), and one morning presented myself spelling-book in hand, a, b, c,—I picked it out letter by letter, and what was the purport of this miraculous posy? Some cherished legend of the past you 'll say—'*How Moses hocus-pocussed Egypt's land with fly and locust,*'—or, '*How to Jonah sounded harshish, Get thee up and go to Tarshish,*'—or, '*How the angel meeting Balaam, Straight his ass returned a salaam.*' In no wise! '*Shackabrach—Boach—somebody or other—Isaach, Re-cei-ver, Pur-cha-ser, and Ex-chan-ger of—Stolen goods!*, So talk to me of the religion of a bishop! I have renounced all bishops save Bishop Beveridge—mean to live so—and die—*As some Greek dog-sage, dead and merry, Hellward bound in Charon's wherry—With food for both worlds, under and upper, Lupine-seed and Hecate's supper, and never an obolus*—though, thanks to you, or this Intendant thro' you, or this Bishop thro' his Intendant, I possess a burning pocketful of *zwanzigers—to pay the Stygian ferry!* 38

1st Policeman. There is the girl, then; go and deserve them the moment you have pointed out to us Signor Luigi and his mother. (*To the rest*) I have been noticing a house yonder this long while—not a shutter unclosed since morning! 43

2d Policeman. Old Luca Gaddi's, that owns the silk-mills here: he dozes by the hour, wakes up, sighs deeply, says he should like to be Prince Metternich, and then dozes again, after having bidden young Sebald, the foreigner, set his wife to playing draughts. Never molest such a household, they mean well. 49

Bluphocks. Only, cannot you tell me something of this little Pippa I must have to do with? One could make some-

thing of that name. Pippa—that is, short for Felippa—rhyming to—*Panurge consults Hertrippa—Believ'st thou, King Agrippa?* Something might be done with that name.

2d Policeman. Put into rhyme that your head and a ripe musk-melon would not be dear at half a *zwanziger!* Leave this fooling, and look out: the afternoon 's over or nearly so.

3d Policeman. Where in this passport of Signor Luigi does our Principal instruct you to watch him so narrowly? There? what 's there beside a simple signature? (That English fool 's busy watching.)

2d Policeman. Flourish all round—'Put all possible obstacles in his way;' oblong dot at the end—'Detain him till further advices reach you;' scratch at bottom—'Send him back on pretence of some informality in the above;' ink-spirt on right-hand side (which is the case here)—'Arrest him at once.' Why and wherefore, I do n't concern myself, but my instructions amount to this: if Signor Luigi leaves home to-night for Vienna, well and good—the passport deposed with us for our *visa* is really for his own use, they have misinformed the Office, and he means well; but let him stay over to-night—there has been the pretence we suspect, the accounts of his corresponding and holding intelligence with the Carbonari are correct, we arrest him at once, to-morrow comes Venice, and presently Spielberg. Bluphocks makes the signal sure enough! That is he, entering the turret with his mother, no doubt.

III.—EVENING. *Inside the Turret on the Hill above Asolo.* LUIGI *and his Mother entering.*

Mother. If there blew wind, you 'd hear a long sigh, easing
The utmost heaviness of music's heart.

Luigi. Here in the archway?

Mother. Oh no, no—in farther,
...e the echo is made, on the ridge.

Luigi. Here surely, then.
How plain the tap of my heel as I leaped up!
Hark—'Lucius Junius!' The very ghost of a voice,
Whose body is caught and kept by—what are those?
Mere withered wallflowers, waving overhead?
They seem an elvish group with thin bleached hair
That lean out of their topmost fortress—look
And listen, mountain men, to what we say,
Hands under chin of each grave earthy face.
Up and show faces all of you!—'All of you!'
That 's the king's dwarf with the scarlet comb; old Franz,
Come down and meet your fate! Hark—'Meet your fate!'
Mother. Let him not meet it, my Luigi—do not
Go to his city! Putting crime aside,
Half of these ills of Italy are feigned;
Your Pellicos and writers for effect
Write for effect.
Luigi. Hush! say A writes, and B.
Mother. These A's and B's write for effect, I say.
Then, evil is in its nature loud, while good
Is silent; you hear each petty injury,
None of his virtues; he is old beside,
Quiet and kind, and densely stupid. Why
Do A and B not kill him themselves?
Luigi. They teach
Others to kill him—me—and, if I fail,
Others to succeed; now, if A tried and failed,
I could not teach that: mine 's the lesser task.
Mother, they visit night by night—
Mother. You, Luigi?
Ah, will you let me tell you what you are?
Luigi. Why not? Oh, the one thing you fear to hint,
You may assure yourself I say and say
Ever to myself. At times—nay, even as now
We sit—I think my mind is touched, suspect

All is not sound; but is not knowing that
What constitutes one sane or otherwise?
I know I am thus—so all is right again.
I laugh at myself as through the town I walk,
And see men merry as if no Italy
Were suffering; then I ponder—'I am rich,
Young, healthy; why should this fact trouble me
More than it troubles these?' But it does trouble.
No, trouble 's a bad word; for as I walk
There 's springing and melody and giddiness,
And old quaint turns and passages of my youth,
Dreams long forgotten, little in themselves,
Return to me—whatever may amuse me,
And earth seems in a truce with me, and heaven
Accords with me, all things suspend their strife,
The very cicala laughs 'There goes he, and there!
Feast him, the time is short; he is on his way
For the world's sake: feast him this once, our friend!'
And in return for all this, I can trip
Cheerfully up the scaffold-steps. I go
This evening, mother!

Mother. But mistrust yourself—
Mistrust the judgment you pronounce on him!

Luigi. Oh, there I feel—am sure that I am right!

Mother. Mistrust your judgment, then, of the mere means
To this wild enterprise: say you are right,
How should one in your state e'er bring to pass
What would require a cool head, a cold heart,
And a calm hand? You never will escape.

Luigi. Escape? To even wish that would spoil all.
The dying is best part of it. Too much
Have I enjoyed these fifteen years of mine,
To leave myself excuse for longer life:
Was not life pressed down, running o'er with joy,
That I might finish with it ere my fellows

Who, sparelier feasted, make a longer stay?
I was put at the board-head, helped to all
At first; I rise up happy and content.
God must be glad one loves his world so much.
I can give news of earth to all the dead
Who ask me:—last year's sunsets, and great stars
That had a right to come first and see ebb
The crimson wave that drifts the sun away—
Those crescent moons with notched and burning rims
That strengthened into sharp fire, and there stood,
Impatient of the azure—and that day
In March, a double rainbow stopped the storm—
May's warm, slow, yellow moonlit summer nights—
Gone are they, but I have them in my soul!
Mother. (He will not go!)
Luigi. You smile at me? 'T is true,—
Voluptuousness, grotesqueness, ghastliness,
Environ my devotedness as quaintly
As round about some antique altar wreathe
The rose festoons, goats' horns, and oxen's skulls.
Mother. See now: you reach the city, you must cross
His threshold—how?
Luigi. Oh, that 's if we conspired!
Then would come pains in plenty, as you guess—
But guess not how the qualities most fit
For such an office, qualities I have,
Would little stead me otherwise employed,
Yet prove of rarest merit only here.
Every one knows for what his excellence
Will serve, but no one ever will consider
For what his worst defect might serve; and yet
Have you not seen me range our coppice yonder
In search of a distorted ash? I find
The wry spoilt branch a natural perfect bow!
Fancy the thrice-sage, thrice-precautioned man

That treaty whereby—
Mother. Well?
Luigi. (Sure he 's arrived,
The telltale cuckoo—Spring 's his confidant,
And he lets out her April purposes!)
Or—better go at once to modern time—
He has—they have—in fact, I understand
But can 't restate the matter; that 's my boast:
Others could reason it out to you, and prove
Things they have made me feel.
Mother. Why go to-night?
Morn 's for adventure. Jupiter is now
A morning-star. I cannot hear you, Luigi!
Luigi. 'I am the bright and morning-star,' saith God—
And, 'to such an one I give the morning-star!'
The gift of the morning-star! Have I God's gift
Of the morning-star?
Mother. Chiara will love to see
That Jupiter an evening-star next June.
Luigi. True, mother. Well for those who live through June!
Great noontides, thunder-storms, all glaring pomps
Which triumph at the heels of June the God
Leading his revel thro' our leafy world.
Yes, Chiara will be here—
Mother. In June: remember,
Yourself appointed that month for her coming.
Luigi. Was that low noise the echo?
Mother. The night-wind.
She must be grown—with her blue eyes upturned
As if life were one long and sweet surprise:
In June she comes.
Luigi. We were to see together
The Titian at Treviso. There, again!

(*From without is heard the voice of* PIPPA *singing*)

A king lived long ago,
In the morning of the world,
When earth was nigher heaven than now;
And the king's locks curled,
Disparting o'er a forehead full
As the milk-white space 'twixt horn and horn
Of some sacrificial bull—
Only calm as a babe new-born:
For he was got to a sleepy mood,
So safe from all decrepitude,
Age with its bane, so sure gone by—
The gods so loved him while he dreamed,
That, having lived thus long, there seemed
No need the king should ever die.

Luigi. No need that sort of king should ever die!

Among the rocks his city was:
Before his palace, in the sun,
He sat to see his people pass,
And judge them every one
From its threshold of smooth stone.
They haled him many a valley-thief
Caught in the sheep-pens, robber-chief
Swarthy and shameless, beggar-cheat,
Spy-prowler, or rough pirate found
On the sea-sand left aground;
And sometimes clung about his feet,
With bleeding lip and burning cheek,
A woman, bitterest wrong to speak
Of one with sullen thickset brows;
And sometimes from the prison-house
The angry priests a pale wretch brought,
Who through some chink had pushed and pressed,
On knees and elbows, belly and breast,

Worm-like into the temple,—caught
At last there by the very god,
Who ever in the darkness strode
Backward and forward, keeping watch
O'er his brazen bowls, such rogues to catch!
These, all and every one,
The king judged, sitting in the sun.

Luigi. That king should still judge sitting in the sun!

His councillors, on left and right,
Looked anxious up,—but no surprise
Disturbed the king's old smiling eyes,
Where the very blue had turned to white.
'T is said, a Python scared one day
The breathless city, till he came,
With forky tongue and eyes on flame,
Where the old king sat to judge alway;
But when he saw the sweepy hair,
Girt with a crown of berries rare
Which the god will hardly give to wear
To the maiden who singeth, dancing bare
In the altar-smoke by the pine-torch lights,
At his wondrous forest rites—
Seeing this, he did not dare
Approach that threshold in the sun,
Assault the old king smiling there.
Such grace had kings when the world begun!

(PIPPA *passes.*)

Luigi. And such grace have they, now that the world ends!
The Python at the city, on the throne,
And brave men, God would crown for slaying him,
Lurk in bye-corners lest they fall his prey.

Are crowns yet to be won, in this late time,
Which weakness makes me hesitate to reach?
'T is God's voice calls, how could I stay? Farewell!

Talk by the way, while PIPPA *is passing from the Turret to the Bishop's brother's House, close to the Duomo Santa Maria. Poor Girls sitting on the steps.*

1st Girl. There goes a swallow to Venice—the stout seafarer!
Seeing those birds fly, makes one wish for wings.
Let us all wish; you, wish first!
2d Girl. I? This sunset
To finish.
3d Girl. That old—somebody I know,
Grayer and older than my grandfather,
To give me the same treat he gave last week—
Feeding me on his knee with fig-peckers,
Lampreys, and red Breganze-wine, and mumbling
The while some folly about how well I fare,
Let sit and eat my supper quietly—
Since had he not himself been late this morning,
Detained at—never mind where,—had he not—
'Eh, baggage, had I not!'—
2d Girl. How she can lie!
1st Girl. My turn.
Spring 's come and summer 's coming: I would wear
A long loose gown—down to the feet and hands,
With plaits here, close about the throat, all day;
And all night lie, the cool long nights, in bed;
And have new milk to drink, apples to eat,
Deuzans and junetings, leather-coats—ah, I should say,
That is away in the fields—miles!
3d Girl. Say at once
You 'd be at home—she 'd always be at home!
Now comes the story of the farm among

The cherry orchards, and how April snowed
White blossoms on her as she ran. Why, fool,
They 've rubbed the chalk-mark out, how tall you were,
Twisted your starling's neck, broken his cage,
Made a dunghill of your garden!
1st Girl. They destroy
My garden since I left them? well—perhaps!
I would have done so—so I hope they have!
A fig-tree curled out of our cottage wall;
They called it mine, I have forgotten why,
It must have been there long ere I was born:
Cric—cric—I think I hear the wasps o'erhead
Pricking the papers strung to flutter there
And keep off birds in fruit-time—coarse long papers,
And the wasps eat them, prick them through and through.
3d Girl. How her mouth twitches! Where was I?—before
She broke in with her wishes and long gowns
And wasps—would I be such a fool?—Oh, here!
See how that beetle burnishes in the path!
There sparkles he along the dust; and, there—
Your journey to that maize-tuft spoiled at least!
1st Girl. When I was young, they said if you killed one
Of those sunshiny beetles, that his friend
Up there would shine no more that day nor next.
2d Girl. When you were young? Nor are you young, that 's true!
How your plump arms, that were, have dropped away!
Why, I can span them! Cecco beats you still?
No matter, so you keep your curious hair.
I wish they 'd find a way to dye our hair
Your colour—any lighter tint, indeed,
Than black—the men say they are sick of black,
Black eyes, black hair!
4th Girl. Sick of yours, like enough!
Do you pretend you ever tasted lampreys

And ortolans? Giovita, of the palace,
Engaged (but there 's no trusting him) to slice me
Polenta with a knife that had cut up
An ortolan.
  2d Girl. Why, there! is not that Pippa
We are to talk to, under the window,—quick,—
Where the lights are?
  1st Girl. That she? No, or she would sing.
For the Intendant said—
  3d Girl. Oh, you sing first!
Then, if she listens and comes close—I 'll tell you,
Sing that song the young English noble made,
Who took you for the purest of the pure,
And meant to leave the world for you—what fun!
  2d Girl. [Sings]

You 'll love me yet!—and I can tarry
Your love's protracted growing:
June reared that bunch of flowers you carry
From seeds of April's sowing.

I plant a heartful now: some seed
At least is sure to strike
And yield—what you 'll not pluck indeed,
Not love, but, may be, like.

You 'll look at least on love's remains,
A grave's one violet:
Your look?—that pays a thousand pains.
What 's death?—you 'll love me yet!

3d Girl. (*To Pippa, who approaches*) Oh, you may come closer—we shall not eat you! Why, you seem the very person that the great rich handsome Englishman has fallen so violently in love with! I 'll tell you all about it.

IV.—NIGHT. *The Palace by the Duomo.* MONSIGNOR, *dismissing his* Attendants.

Monsignor. Thanks, friends, many thanks. I chiefly desire life now, that I may recompense every one of you. Most I know something of already. What, a repast prepared? *Benedicto benedicatur* — ugh — ugh! Where was I? Oh, as you were remarking, Ugo, the weather is mild, very unlike winter-weather; but I am a Sicilian, you know, and shiver in your Julys here. To be sure, when 't was full summer at Messina, as we priests used to cross in procession the great square on Assumption Day, you might see our thickest yellow tapers twist suddenly in two, each like a falling star, or sink down on themselves in a gore of wax. But go, my friends, but go! [*To the Intendant*] Not you, Ugo! [*The others leave the apartment*] I have long wanted to converse with you, Ugo!

Intendant. Uguccio—

Monsignor. —'guccio Stefani, man! of Ascoli, Fermo, and Fossombruno;—what I do need instructing about, are these accounts of your administration of my poor brother's affairs. Ugh! I shall never get through a third part of your accounts: take some of these dainties before we attempt it, however. Are you bashful to that degree? For me, a crust and water suffice.

Intendant. Do you choose this especial night to question me?

Monsignor. This night, Ugo. You have managed my late brother's affairs since the death of our elder brother—fourteen years and a month, all but three days. On the 3d of December, I find him—

Intendant. If you have so intimate an acquaintance with your brother's affairs, you will be tender of turning so far back: they will hardly bear looking into, so far back.

Monsignor. Ay, ay, ugh, ugh,—nothing but disappointments

here below! I remark a considerable payment made to yourself on this 3d of December. Talk of disappointments! There was a young fellow here, Jules, a foreign sculptor I did my utmost to advance, that the Church might be a gainer by us both: he was going on hopefully enough, and of a sudden he notifies to me some marvellous change that has happened in his notions of art. Here 's his letter: 'He never had a clearly conceived ideal within his brain till to-day. Yet since his hand could manage a chisel, he has practised expressing other men's ideals; and, in the very perfection he has attained to, he foresees an ultimate failure: his unconscious hand will pursue its prescribed course of old years, and will reproduce with a fatal expertness the ancient types, let the novel one appear never so palpably to his spirit. There is but one method of escape: confiding the virgin type to as chaste a hand, he will turn painter instead of sculptor, and paint, not carve, its characteristics,'—strike out, I dare say, a school like Correggio: how think you, Ugo? 50

Intendant. Is Correggio a painter?

Monsignor. Foolish Jules! and yet, after all, why foolish? He may—probably will, fail egregiously; but if there should arise a new painter, will it not be in some such way by a poet now, or a musician—spirits who have conceived and perfected an ideal through some other channel—transferring it to this, and escaping our conventional roads by pure ignorance of them; eh, Ugo? If you have no appetite, talk at least, Ugo! 59

Intendant. Sir, I can submit no longer to this course of yours. First, you select the group of which I formed one,—next you thin it gradually,—always retaining me with your smile,—and so do you proceed till you have fairly got me alone with you between four stone walls. And now then? Let this farce, this chatter, end now—what is it you want with me? 66

Monsignor. Ugo!

Intendant. From the instant you arrived, I felt your smile on me as you questioned me about this and the other article in those papers—why your brother should have given me this villa, that *podere*,—and your nod at the end meant—what?

Monsignor. Possibly that I wished for no loud talk here. if once you set me coughing, Ugo!—

Intendant. I have your brother's hand and seal to all I possess: now ask me what for! what service I did him—ask me!

Monsignor. I would better not: I should rip up old disgraces, let out my poor brother's weaknesses. By the way, Maffeo of Forli—which, I forgot to observe, is your true name—was the interdict ever taken off you, for robbing that church at Cesena?

Intendant. No, nor needs be; for when I murdered your brother's friend, Pasquale, for him—

Monsignor. Ah, he employed you in that business, did he? Well, I must let you keep, as you say, this villa and that *podere*, for fear the world should find out my relations were of so indifferent a stamp! Maffeo, my family is the oldest in Messina, and century after century have my progenitors gone on polluting themselves with every wickedness under heaven: my own father—rest his soul!—I have, I know, a chapel to support that it may rest; my dear two dead brothers were—what you know tolerably well; I, the youngest, might have rivalled them in vice, if not in wealth, but from my boyhood I came out from among them, and so am not partaker of their plagues. My glory springs from another source; or if from this, by contrast only,—for I, the bishop, am the brother of your employers, Ugo. I hope to repair some of their wrong, however: so far as my brother's ill-gotten treasure reverts to me, I can stop the consequences of his crime; and not one *soldo* shall escape me. Maffeo, the sword we quiet men spurn away, you shrewd knaves pick

up and commit murders with; what opportunities the virtuous forego, the villainous seize. Because, to pleasure myself, apart from other considerations, my food would be millet-cake, my dress sackcloth, and my couch straw,—am I therefore to let you, the offscouring of the earth, seduce the poor and ignorant, by appropriating a pomp these will be sure to think lessens the abominations so unaccountably and exclusively associated with it? Must I let villas and *poderi* go to you, a murderer and thief, that you may beget by means of them other murderers and thieves? No—if my cough would but allow me to speak!

Intendant. What am I to expect? You are going to punish me?

Monsignor. Must punish you, Maffeo. I cannot afford to cast away a chance. I have whole centuries of sin to redeem, and only a month or two of life to do it in. How should I dare to say—

Intendant. 'Forgive us our trespasses?'

Monsignor. My friend, it is because I avow myself a very worm, sinful beyond measure, that I reject a line of conduct you would applaud, perhaps. Shall I proceed, as it were, a-pardoning?—I, who have no symptom of reason to assume that aught less than my strenuousest efforts will keep myself out of mortal sin, much less keep others out. No: I do trespass, but will not double that by allowing you to trespass.

Intendant. And suppose the villas are not your brother's to give, nor yours to take? Oh, you are hasty enough just now!

Monsignor. 1, 2—No. 3!—ay, can you read the substance of a letter, No. 3, I have received from Rome? It is precisely on the ground there mentioned, of the suspicion I have that a certain child of my late elder brother, who would have succeeded to his estates, was murdered in infancy by you, Maffeo, at the instigation of my late brother—that the Pontiff enjoins on me not merely the bringing that Maffeo to con-

dign punishment, but the taking all pains, as guardian of the infant's heritage for the Church, to recover it parcel by parcel, howsoever, whensoever, and wheresoever. While you are now gnawing those fingers, the police are engaged in sealing up your papers, Maffeo, and the mere raising my voice brings my people from the next room to dispose of yourself. But I want you to confess quietly, and save me raising my voice. Why, man, do I not know the old story? The heir between the succeeding heir, and this heir's ruffianly instrument, and their complot's effect, and the life of fear and bribes and ominous smiling silence? Did you throttle or stab my brother's infant? Come, now!

Intendant. So old a story, and tell it no better? When did such an instrument ever produce such an effect? Either the child smiles in his face, or, most likely, he is not fool enough to put himself in the employer's power so thoroughly; the child is always ready to produce—as you say—howsoever, wheresoever, and whensoever.

Monsignor. Liar!

Intendant. Strike me? Ah, so might a father chastise! I shall sleep soundly to-night at least, though the gallows await me to-morrow; for what a life did I lead! Carlo of Cesena reminds me of his connivance, every time I pay his annuity —which happens commonly thrice a year. If I remonstrate, he will confess all to the good bishop—you!

Monsignor. I see thro' the trick, caitiff! I would you spoke truth for once. All shall be sifted, however—seven times sifted.

Intendant. And how my absurd riches encumbered me! I dared not lay claim to above half my possessions. Let me but once unbosom myself, glorify heaven, and die!— Sir, you are no brutal, dastardly idiot like your brother I frightened to death: let us understand one another. Sir, I will make away with her for you—the girl—here close at hand; not the stupid obvious kind of killing; do not speak—

know nothing of her or me! I see her every day—saw her this morning. Of course there is to be no killing; but at Rome the courtesans perish off every three years, and I can entice her thither—have, indeed, begun operations already. There 's a certain lusty, blue-eyed, florid-complexioned English knave I and the police employ occasionally. You assent, I perceive—no, that 's not it—assent I do not say—but you will let me convert my present havings and holdings into cash, and give me time to cross the Alps? 'T is but a little black-eyed, pretty singing Felippa, gay silk-winding girl. I have kept her out of harm's way up to this present; for I always intended to make your life a plague to you with her. 'T is as well settled once and forever. Some women I have procured will pass Bluphocks, my handsome scoundrel, off for somebody; and once Pippa entangled!—you conceive? Through her singing? Is it a bargain?

(*From without is heard the voice of* PIPPA *singing*)

Overhead the tree-tops meet,
Flowers and grass spring 'neath one's feet;
There was nought above me, nought below,
My childhood had not learned to know;
For what are the voices of birds—
Ay, and of beasts—but words, our words,
Only so much more sweet?
The knowledge of that with my life begun.
But I had so near made out the sun,
And counted your stars, the seven and one,
Like the fingers of my hand:
Nay, I could all but understand
Wherefore through heaven the white moon ranges;
And just when out of her soft fifty changes
No unfamiliar face might overlook me—
Suddenly God took me!

(PIPPA *passes.*)

Monsignor. [*Springing up.*] My people—one and all—all —within there! Gag this villain—tie him hand and foot! He dares—I know not half he dares—but remove him—quick! *Miserere mei, Domine!* quick, I say!

PIPPA'S *Chamber again. She enters it.*

The bee with his comb,
The mouse at her dray,
The grub in its tomb,
Wile winter away;
But the fire-fly and hedge-shrew and lob-worm, I pray,
How fare they?
Ha, ha, best thanks for your counsel, my Zanze!
'Feast upon lampreys, quaff the Breganze'—
The summer of life so easy to spend,
And care for to-morrow so soon put away!
But winter hastens at summer's end,
And fire-fly, hedge-shrew, lob-worm, pray,
How fare they?
No bidding me then to—what did she say?
'Pare your nails pearlwise, get your small feet shoes
More like'—what said she?—'and less like canoes!'
How pert that girl was!—would I be those pert,
Impudent, staring women? It had done me,
However, surely no such mighty hurt
To learn his name who passed that jest upon me:
No foreigner, that I can recollect,
Came, as she says, a month since, to inspect
Our silk-mills—none with blue eyes and thick rings
Of raw-silk-coloured hair, at all events.
Well, if old Luca keep his good intents,
We shall do better, see what next year brings!
I may buy shoes, my Zanze, not appear
More destitute than you perhaps next year!
Bluph—something! I had caught the uncouth name

Here remain unchanged, unmoved now—
Call this pampered thing improved now!
Suppose there 's a king of the flowers,
And a girl-show held in his bowers—
'Look ye, buds, this growth of ours,'
Says he, 'Zanze from the Brenta,
I have made her gorge polenta
Till both cheeks are near as bouncing
As her—name there 's no pronouncing!
See this heightened colour too,
For she swilled Breganze wine
Till her nose turned deep carmine—
'T was but white when wild she grew.
And only by this Zanze's eyes
Of which we could not change the size,
The magnitude of all achieved
Otherwise may be perceived!'

Oh, what a drear, dark close to my poor day!
How could that red sun drop in that black cloud?
Ah, Pippa, morning's rule is moved away,
Dispensed with, never more to be allowed!
Day's turn is over—now arrives the night's.
O lark, be day's apostle
To mavis, merle, and throstle,
Bid them their betters jostle
From day and its delights!
But at night, brother howlet, over the woods,
Toll the world to thy chantry;
Sing to the bats' sleek sisterhoods
Full complines with gallantry:
Then, owls and bats,
Cowls and twats,
Monks and nuns, in a cloister's moods,
Adjourn to the oak-stump pantry!

[*After she has begun to undress hersel*

Now, one thing I should like to really know:
How near I ever might approach all these
I only fancied being, this long day—
Approach, I mean, so as to touch them, so
As to—in some way—move them—if you please,
Do good or evil to them some slight way.
For instance, if I wind
Silk to-morrow, my silk may bind

[*Sitting on the bedside.*

And broider Ottima's cloak's hem.
Ah, me and my important part with them,
This morning's hymn half promised when I rose!
True in some sense or other, I suppose.

[*As she lies down.*

God bless me! I can pray no more to-night.
No doubt, some way or other, hymns say right.
All service ranks the same with God—
With God, whose puppets, best and worst,
Are we: there is no last nor first.

[*She sleeps.*

NOTES.

the Austrian succession the French resolved to expel the English from India. Madras was besieged, razed, and its clerks and merchants captured. Clive escaped in disguise, and joined the Company's force as an ensign. The French allied with the Emperor of India made rapid conquests, and Trichinopoly, the one town which held out against the nabob of the Carnatic, was all but brought to surrender when Clive (1751) came forward with a daring scheme for its relief. With a few hundred green troops he surprised, in a thunderstorm, Arcot, the nabob's capital, and held it for fifty days against thousands of assailants. Released by reinforcements, he led handfuls of cowardly Sepoy troops to equally splendid victories in the field, and, in short, completely routed the French.

Broken in health by the climate, he returned to England in 1753. Two years later he went back as Governor of Fort St. David. At once he was called to avenge the hideous Indian massacre of Bengal. A hundred and fifty English traders had been thrust by Surajah Dowlah into the Black Hole, and after one night only twenty-three remained alive. Clive sailed for Bengal with 3000 men. When he faced the Indian army on the plain of Plassey the odds were so great that on the very eve of the battle a council of war advised an English retreat. Clive withdrew to a neighboring grove, and after an hour's lonely musing gave the word to fight. With his 3000 men he gained an incredible victory over the nabob's army of 60,000. With the victory of Plassey began the empire of England in the East.

After another visit to England Clive returned in 1765 to India, to attempt reform in the English service there. The two years of his rule were in fact the most glorious of his life. He returned to England poorer than he went, to face the storm raised at home among those who were profiting by Indian abuses. But he had roused a new interest in the subject of India, and an investigation of the whole administration was begun by a committee of the Commons. Clive's own early acts were examined with unsparing severity. But the memory of his great deeds won from the House, at last, a unanimous vote "that Robert Lord Clive did at the same time render great and meritorious services to his country."

Broken in health by long residence in India, and in spirit by his trial, he died by his own hand in London in 1774.

The above is condensed from Green's *Short History of the English People*. For further details see *Life of Clive*, by Sir John Malcolm.

The anecdote which forms the basis of *Clive* was told to Mr. Browning in 1846 by Mrs. Jameson, who had shortly before heard it at Lansdowne House, from Macaulay.

8. *Plassy*. The place is in the presidency of Bengal, about eighty miles north of Calcutta. The battle was fought on the 23d of June, 1757. The more common spelling of the name is *Plassey*.

12. *This forthright, that meander*. A reminiscence of Shakespeare, *Tempest*, iii. 3. 3: "Through forthrights and meanders;" that is, straight paths and winding ones.

16. *Rummer-glass*. A sort of drinking-glass, such as Rhenish wine is usually drunk in; also, a brimmer, or glass of any liquor filled to the

top. The glasses were probably so called because used in former times in the *Römersaal* at Frankfort, when they drank the new emperor's health. If so, the word is Latin, from *Roma*, Rome (Skeat).

23. *Ticklish.* Tickling, pleasing.

40. *Arcot.* This old Mohammedan capital of the Carnatic is on the Palaur, seventy miles to the southwest of Madras.

47. *Bee's-wing.* A peculiar film in port-wine, indicative of age. The word is but just finding its way into American dictionaries, being given only in the supplements of Webster and Worcester.

50. *As his scale-mail's warty iron*, etc. A line whose sound emphasizes its sense,—onomatopoetic.

Cuirasses. Not in the dictionaries as a verb. Browning, like Shakespeare, turns a noun into a verb when it suits his purpose.

65. *A drug-box.* With opium in it. Cf. 77 below. There is an antithetical point in "*honest* liquor."

70. *What said Pitt?* Pitt entered the House of Commons from a borough owned by Clive. Clive was not above the corrupter political methods of gain. There was little obligation on the part of Pitt, since the bargain for a seat from a "Borough-monger" was purely a commercial matter. But the Great Commoner seems to have maintained a warm admiration for Clive.

89. *When he spoke*, etc. Browning has caught the two most striking symptoms of the victim of the opium-habit; the fixed though dazed regard of some indifferent object, and the lifeless, monotonous voice.

94. *At a factor's elbow.* His company at the card-table.

101. *Cock o' the Walk.* A conceited bully.

103. *Over one green baize.* Over the same card-table.

111. *Force a card.* A gambler's trick by which the person holding the cards determines the cut and so the trump.

112. *Thyrsis . . . Chloe.* Now generic names for a rustic and his love; first used by Theocritus in one of his idyls.

190. *Brought the late-ejected devil*, etc. Cf. *Matt.* xii. 45, *Luke* xi. 24.

222. *Tenant at the Frenchman's will.* See note on title.

240. *We'll hope condoned.* Compare *Apparent Failure*, 7:

"It 's wiser being good than bad;
It 's safer being meek than fierce:
It 's fitter being sane than mad.
My own hope is, a sun will pierce
The thickest cloud earth ever stretched;
That, after Last, returns the First,
Though a wide compass round be fetched;
That what began best, can 't end worst,
Nor what God blessed once, prove accurst." *

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* *Dramatis Personæ*, p. 252.

"HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS FROM GHENT TO AIX."

The "Good News" is that of the "Pacification de Gant," concluded in 1576. It was a treaty of union between Holland, Zealand, and the southern Netherlands, against Spain, under the tyrannical Philip II. The treaty was greeted rapturously by the frontier cities, because it was expected to free the Netherlands from Spanish power.

"There is," writes Mr. Browning, "no sort of historical foundation about 'Good News from Ghent.' I wrote it under the bulwark of a vessel off the African coast, after I had been at sea long enough to appreciate even the fancy of a gallop on the back of a certain good horse 'York,' then in my stable at home. It was written in pencil on the fly-leaf of Bartoli's *Simboli*, I remember."

While there is, then, no historical foundation for the "gallop," the verisimilitude of the situation is perfect. Aix might easily have resolved to set herself on fire at a given hour, rather than submit herself and her citizens piecemeal to the torch of the persecutor. The "horse without peer" might possibly have galloped the ninety-odd miles between Ghent and Aix, but the feat would be a marvellous one.

10. *Pique*. The pommel of the saddle. We state this on authority of an army officer, although the meaning is in none of the dictionaries.

14. *Lokeren*. A town twelve miles from Ghent, in a direction a little north of east.

15. *Boom*. Sixteen miles due east from Lokeren.

16. *Düffeld*, or Duffel, is about twelve miles east of Boom, and a few miles north of Mechlin.

17. *Mecheln*. The contracted form of *Mechelen*, the Flemish form of *Mechlin* (French, *Malines*). The *church steeple* is the lofty (324 feet) though unfinished tower of the Cathedral of St. Rombold. Like many of the great Belgian churches, it is noted for its chimes.

18. *Aerschot*. All the eds. spell the name *Aershot*; but the *sch* is pronounced like *sk*. The town is fifteen miles from Duffel.

31. *Hasselt*. The capital of the province of Limbourg. It is about twenty-four miles from Aerschot, and almost eighty from Ghent by the route described. Dirck had, indeed, "galloped bravely."

38. *Looz*. This town is seven or eight miles due *south* from Hasselt, and *Tongres* is also out of the direct road to Aix-la-Chapelle. We should expect the riders to take the route *via* Maastricht. By rail it is forty-one miles from Hasselt to Aix, and the highway cannot be much less.

41. *Dalhem*. Apparently some village near Aix. It cannot be the frontier-town Dalheim, for that lies too far to the north. The *dome-spire* is probably the cupola of the "octagon" of the cathedral, built by Charlemagne and containing his tomb.

46. *Her fate*. Self-imposed, of course. See note on the title.

52. *His pet-name*. The skill which leaves the tenderness of the "pet-name" to our imagination is beyond praise.

THE LOST LEADER.

There has been much idle discussion over the original of *The Lost Leader*. Wordsworth, Southey, Charles Kingsley, have all been assigned to the enviable (?) position of Mr. Browning's model. The following note from Mr. Browning ought to settle the matter. It is published in the Preface to a recent edition of Wordsworth's Prose:

"19 WARWICK-CRESCENT, W., *Feb.* 24, '75.

"DEAR MR. GROSART,—I have been asked the question you now address me with, and as duly answered it, I can 't remember how many times; there is no sort of objection to one more assurance, or rather confession, on my part, that I *did* in my hasty youth presume to use the great and venerated personality of WORDSWORTH as a sort of painter's model; one from which this or the other particular feature may be selected and turned to account: had I intended more, above all, such a boldness as portraying the entire man, I should not have talked about 'handfuls of silver and bits of ribbon.' These never influenced the change of politics in the great poet; whose defection, nevertheless, accompanied as it was by a regular face-about of his special party, was to my juvenile apprehension, and even mature consideration, an event to deplore. But just as in the tapestry on my wall I can recognize figures which have *struck out* a fancy, on occasion, that though truly enough thus derived, yet would be preposterous as a copy, so, though I dare not deny the original of my little poem, I altogether refuse to have it considered as the 'very effigies' of such a moral and intellectual superiority.

"Faithfully yours, ROBERT BROWNING."

20. *Whom the rest bade aspire.* The allusion is, of course, to the healthful discontent and aspiration which the Liberals tried to nourish among the lower classes.

23. *One more devil's-triumph.* The original reading was "One more triumph for devils."

30. *Menace our heart*, etc. The reading was originally "Aim at our heart ere we pierce through his own."

good words

THE BISHOP ORDERS HIS TOMB AT ST. PRAXED'S CHURCH.

St. Praxedis (or Praxedes), the Virgin, was the daughter of Pudens, a Roman Senator, the friend of St. Paul (2 *Tim.* iv. 21). She lived till the time of Antoninus Pius, and was distinguished for her devotion, her simplicity, and her good works. An oratory is said to have been built above her grave in Rome by Pius I. in A.D. 499. This building was destroyed A.D. 822, and the present church erected by Paschal I. During the absence of the popes at Avignon it fell to ruin, but was restored by

Nicholas V. in the 15th century, and by St. Charles Borromeo in 1564. The mosaics of the church are especially remarkable. All the stone-work is of the rarest. The tribune is ascended by a flight of steps composed of large slabs of *rosso antico*. The pillars on each side of the high altar are of white marble beautifully carved with foliage. St. Praxed's Slab (on which she slept) is of *nero-bianco* granite. One of the chapels is entered by a doorway formed of two columns of the rare black porphyry and granite, supporting an elaborately sculptured frieze. The outer and inner walls are covered with mosaics. From their richness this chapel was called *Orto del Paradiso*, or the Garden of Paradise. It contains one of the most celebrated relics in Rome—the column to which Christ was bound. It is a curious fact that so elaborate a church should have risen in honor of a maiden whose distinguishing virtue was her simplicity. To complete the contrast, to-day no woman is allowed to enter this rich chapel except on Sundays in Lent. At other times they can only look into it through a grating.

Opposite the side entrance to the Orto del Paradiso is the tomb of Cardinal Cetive (1474) with his sleeping figure, which reminds us of the Bishop's design for his tomb, whereon he is to "lie through centuries" (80 fol.).

3. *Nephews—sons.* Passing for the former, though really the latter.

5. *Old Gandolf.* The Bishop's predecessor and hated rival.

15. *I fought*, etc. Other great ecclesiastics have thus looked out for their final resting-place in advance. The late pope Pius IX., for example, prepared a mausoleum for himself in the basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore by constructing in front of and beneath the high altar a splendid chamber approached by broad stairways and lined with the most precious marbles and alabaster; but as his death approached he changed his mind and desired to be buried "with the poor" in San Lorenzo.

21. *On the epistle-side.* The right-hand side, as one faces the altar.

23. *Aëry.* Airy; a poetical word used by Keats and others, but rare. Milton has "aëry-light" in *P. L.* v. 4, and "More aëry" in *Id.* v. 481.

25. *Basalt*, a hard, fine-grained rock of volcanic origin. On a slab of this the recumbent statue of the Bishop is to be placed, with a *tabernacle*, or canopy, above him supported by columns of *peach-blossom marble*.

28. *Anselm.* His favourite son, then standing at the foot of his bed.

31. *Onion-stone.* Browning's translation of *cipolin* (Italian *cipollino*, properly a little onion, from *cipolla*, onion, so called because made up of different strata, one lying upon another), a greenish marble, containing white or greenish zones. "Our stupid habit of using foreign words without translation is continually losing us half the force of the foreign language. How many travellers hearing the term '*cipollino*' recognize the intended sense of a stone splitting into concentric coats, like an onion?" (Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. p. 361.)

41. *Olive-frail.* A basket made of rushes, used for packing olives.

42. *Lapis-lazuli.* A beautiful stone of a bright blue color, much valued for ornamental work. It is found in rounded masses of a moderate size, like the *Jew's-head* here.

46. *Frascati.* A favorite resort, twelve miles from Rome, on the slope

of the Alban Hills. It was built in 1191 on the ruins of a villa overgrown with underwood (*frasche*), whence its name.

48. *Like God the Father's globe*, etc. In the great Jesuit church (*Il Gesù*) in Rome, the altar of St. Ignatius is adorned with a group of the Trinity by Bernardino Ludovisi. The Father holds a globe, which is said to be the largest piece of *lapis-lazuli* in existence.

51. *Swift as a weaver's shuttle*, etc. Cf. *Job*, vii. 6.

54. *Antique-black*. "'Nero-antico' is more familiar to our ears; but Browning does right in translating it, as 'cipollino' into 'onion-stone'" (Ruskin). See on 31 above.

55. *My frieze to come beneath*. That is, the sculptured upper part of the sides of the tomb, which is like an oblong box with the *slab* for a cover. This kind of tomb, with its recumbent statue, and with or without the elaborate canopy over it, is the most common type of funeral monument in European churches.

58. *Some tripod, thyrsus*. The juxtaposition of the tripod (the symbol of Delphic wisdom) and the thyrsus (the symbol of Bacchic revels) is a fit introduction to the general chaos of Christian and Pagan art which follows. The spirit of the Renaissance is exactly typified by the conceit of making the mischievous Pan next neighbor to St. Praxed on the one hand and Moses on the other.

66. *Travertine*. A white, hard, semi-crystalline limestone, deposited from the waters of springs or streams holding lime in solution. The name is a corruption of the Latin *Tiburtinus*, from *Tibur*, now *Tivoli*, near Rome.

69. *Jasper*. Probably the variety known as blood-stone, deep green with blood-red spots. No stone takes a finer polish.

71. *Pistachio-nut*. Known also as the green almond. The kernel is shaped like that of the almond, but is a delicate green.

77. *Tully's*. Cicero (*Marcus Tullius*).

79. *Ulpian*. Who did not flourish until long after the Augustan age of Latin literature.

82. *See God made and eaten*. In the Eucharist.

87. *A crook*. The bishop's crosier.

89. *Mortcloth*. Pall.

95. *St. Praxed at his sermon on the mount*. The Saviour and the female saint appear to be confused in the Bishop's wandering thoughts. Cf. 59, 60 above.

99. *Elucescebat*. Blunderingly formed as if from a verb *Elucescere*. The verb "to be notable" (naturally used in an epitaph) is *Elucere*. Evidently, then, *Elucescebat* is not "choice Latin."

101. *Evil and brief*, etc. Cf. *Job*, xiv. 1.

108. *A visor and a Term*. A mask; and a terminal figure, so-called, that is, a half-statue or bust, not placed upon, but springing from a square pillar (the Latin *terminus*). Both these, like the tripod, thyrsus, etc., are Pagan or classical emblems.

111. *Entablature*. This term includes not only the *frieze*, but the horizontal mouldings above and below it.

116. *Gritstone*. A coarse-grained variety of sandstone.

RABBI BEN EZRA.

"One of the deepest and weightiest of all Browning's works. My favorite one. It contains the Philosophy of Life" (Furnivall).

Rabbi Ben Ezra, or Ibn Ezra, was born at Toledo in Spain about 1092 or 1093 A.D., or in 1088, according to one authority. He was poor, but studied hard, wrote patriotic poems, married, had a son Isaac (also a poet), travelled in Africa, the Holy Land, Persia, India, Italy, France, and England. He wrote treatises on Hebrew grammar, astronomy, and mathematics, besides commentaries on the books of the Bible, etc. He died in 1167. His commentary on Isaiah has been translated into English, and published by the Society of Hebrew Literature (London, 1873).

15. *Do I remonstrate*, etc. Age has a satisfaction more keen than that of youth's restless desire to possess the matchless flower or the transcendent star.

16. *Rather I prize the doubt*, etc. Cf. Tennyson, *In Memoriam*, xcv.:

> "There lives more faith in honest doubt,
> Believe me, than in half the creeds."

24. *Irks*. Annoys. The verb was at first used personally, as here. Cf. Surrey, *Æneid*, ii. 18: "The Grekes chieftaines all irked with the war;" Udall, *John*, xii.: "ignominie irketh them muche," etc. Afterwards it came to be employed only impersonally; as often in Shakespeare, Spenser, and other Elizabethan writers. Cf. *F. Q.* vi. 10. 29:

> "Sayd Calidore: 'Now sure it yrketh mee,
> That to thy blisse I made this luckelesse breach,'" etc.

The simple sense here is that care and doubt do not distress beasts, whose sole pleasure is feasting.

31. *Then welcome*, etc. Compare *Easter Day*, xxxiii.:

> "Happy that I can
> Be thwarted as a man,
> Not left in God's contempt apart
> With ghastly smooth life, dead at heart,
> Tame in earth's paddock as her prize."

40. *What I aspired*, etc. Compare Lowell's *Longing:*

> "The thing we long for, that we are
> For one transcendent moment."

52. *Dole*. Share, or portion *dealt*.

84. *Indue*. Put on; its original sense. This word, from the Latin *induere*, is not to be confounded with *endue* or *indue*, which is merely another form of *endow*.

151. *Ay, note that Potter's wheel*, etc. Cf. the splendid episode in the *Rubáiyát* of Omar Khayyám, stanzas 83–90. See also *Isa.* xxix. 16.

156. *Seize the day*. Cf. Horace, *Od.* i. 11. 8: "Carpe diem, quam minimum credula postero."

169. *What though*, etc. The figure of the Potter is continued to the end of the poem.

178. *The new wine's foaming flow*, etc. For the figure (suggested of course by *Matt.* xxvi. 29) cf. Mrs. Browning's *Past and Future:*

> "Dear Christ! when thy new vintage fills my cup,
> This hand shall shake no more, nor that wine spill."

BEN KARSHOOK'S WISDOM.

This poem was printed in *The Keepsake* in 1856. It has, strangely, never been included in any volume of Browning's works.

It seems clear that it was written before *Men and Women* was published (1855), and that it was meant to be part of that work; for in *One Word More*, 135, 136, Browning says:

> "I am mine and yours—the rest be all men's,
> *Karshook*, Cleon, Norbert, and the fifty."

But in the later Tauchnitz Edition of 1872 the *Karshook* is altered into *Karshish*—the narrator of one of the long poems in the volume.

2. *Karshook.* The name means in Hebrew a thistle.

17. *The Hiram's-Hammer*, etc. See 1 *Kings*, vii. 13–22. The figurative use here is thoroughly Oriental.

"CHILDE ROLAND TO THE DARK TOWER CAME."

This poem has enjoyed for some time the reputation of being one of the most obscure and inexplicable pieces of work done by its most obscure and inexplicable author. We try the experiment of printing it without one note except an introductory one. The following article by Mr. Arlo Bates (from *The Critic* for April 26, 1886) throws a flood of light upon the poem, and should, we think, make it intelligible even to the mind unaccustomed to Browning's method:

"Without meaning to analyze, to expound, and least of all to explain a poem from which I would fain keep my hands as reverently as from the Ark, I ask the poet's pardon for saying that to me *Childe Roland* is the most supreme expression of noble allegiance to an ideal—the most absolute faithfulness to a principle, regardless of all else; perhaps I cannot better express what I mean than by saying the most thrilling crystallization of that most noble of human sentiments, of which a bright flower is the motto *Noblesse oblige*.

"Ineffable weariness—that state when the cripple's skull-like laugh ceased to irritate, that most profound condition of lassitude, when even trifles cannot vex—begins the poem; with glimpses behind of the long experience of one who has seen hope die, effort fade, and—worse than all—enthusiasm waste, until even success seemed valueless. A state of exhaustion so utter that nothing but an end, even though it be failure,

could arouse even the phantom of a desire. Then negative objective desolation, so to say; dreariness around in landscape, starved foliage, and on up to the loathsome horse. Then subjective misery; a failure of the very memories which in sheer desperation the hero calls up to strengthen him in an hour whose awful numbness stupefies him. Then, when once more relief is sought outside, impressions that are positively disheartening; a suggestion of conflict that brings an overwhelming impression that all the powers of evil actively pervade this place; then—the Round Tower!

"What does it matter what the tower signifies—whether it be this, that, or the other? If the poem means anything, it means, I am sure, everything in this line. The essential thing is that, after a lifetime pledged to this—whatever the ideal be—the opportunity has come after a cumulative series of disheartenments, and more than all amid an overwhelming sense that failure must be certain where so many have failed; where nature and unseen foes and the ghosts of all his baffled comrades stand watching for his destruction, where defeat is certain and its ignominy already cried aloud by the winds of heaven. And the sublime climax comes in the constancy of the hero:

'In a sheet of flame
I saw them and I knew them all. And yet
Dauntless the slug-horn to my lips I set
And blew.'

The nominal issue of the conflict is no matter, because the real issue is here; with the universe against him, with the realization of all this, dauntless he gives his challenge!

"The whole poem is a series of cumulative effects, of which the end is a fitting climax. One cannot read it without a tingling in every fibre of his being, and a stinging doubt whether in such a case he might not have been found wanting. I cannot conceive of anything more complete, more noble, more inspiring. Heaven forbid that any one should so mistake what I have written as to suppose I think I have 'explained' *Childe Roland*. I have already said that I believe the meaning of the poem could be put in no other words than those of Mr. Browning; and what I have said does not even attempt to convey a hundredth part of what that glorious poem means to me. Mr. Browning himself very likely would smile at what I have written; but I hope the smile might have in it more of tolerance than of anger."

Richard Grant White, in his Introduction to *Selections from Robert Browning's Poems*, has a passage which may throw additional light on this poem, if any is needed.

THE BOY AND THE ANGEL.

The Boy and the Angel was published in *Hood's Magazine*, August, 1844. Six poems by Browning were printed in this magazine between June, 1844, and April, 1845. At that time he was not in the habit of

contributing to magazines, but yielded to an appeal to help poor Hood, who was dying by inches during these months.

The Boy and the Angel was reprinted in the seventh number of *Bells and Pomegranates* in November, 1845. It has especial interest for the student, because many changes were made in this later edition. One additional couplet, also, was introduced in the collected edition issued by Mr. Browning in 1863.

13. *As well as if.* The 1st ed. omits *As well.*

23. *God said in heaven.* The 1st ed. has "In heaven, God said."

27. *Entered in flesh.* The 1st ed. omits *in flesh.*

28. *Lived there.* The 1st ed. omits these two words.

29. *And morning, evening, noon, and night.* The 1st ed. has "And morn, noon, eve, and night."

35. *And ever.* The 1st ed. has "Yet ever," and omits *on earth* in the next line.

37, 38. *He did*, etc. This couplet was inserted in 1863.

46. *The flesh disguise.* The 1st ed. omits *disguise.*

48. *Saint Peter's dome.* The 1st ed. has "the dome."

51. *Dight.* Decked. Cf. Milton, *L'All.* 62: "The clouds in thousand liveries dight."

55, 56. *Since when*, etc. This couplet and the next were inserted in 1845.

59. *And rising.* The 1st ed. has "How rising," thus connecting the couplet with 54.

62. *And on his sight*, etc. The 1st ed. has "And in the Angel burned."

63. *I bore thee*, etc. This couplet was inserted in 1845.

66. *Vain was thy dream*, etc. The 1st ed. has "Vainly hast thou lived many a year."

67. *Thy voice's praise*, etc. This couplet was inserted in 1845.

71, 72. *With that weak voice*, etc. This couplet was inserted in 1845.

73–76. *Back to the cell*, etc. As recast in 1845, except that *Resume* has since been put for "Become." The reading of the 1st ed. was:

"'Be again the boy all curled;
I will finish with the world.'

Theocrite grew old at home,
Gabriel dwelt in Peter's dome."

TWO CAMELS.

Ferishtah's Fancies was published in 1884. The idea of it grew out of a fable by Pilpay, which Browning read when a child. He put this into verse, and then added other episodes to it until now the poem consists of twelve *Fancies* and as many lyric Interludes. Ferishtah is a Persian dervish whose wisdom brings to him many inquirers after truth. He replies to each by a parable or "Fancy." *Two Camels*, which we quote, is the eighth in the series.

There is much of Browning's peculiar mingling of humor and seri-

ousness in all these poems. He is so especially anxious that we should not miss this flavor that he prints opposite the title-page the following passages:

"His genius was jocular, but, when disposed, he could be very serious."—Article "Shakespear," JEREMY COLLIER'S *Historical, &c., Dictionary*, 2d edition, 1701.

"You, Sir, I entertain you for one of my Hundred; only, I do not like the fashion of your garments: you will say, they are Persian; but let them be changed."—*King Lear*, Act III. sc. 6.

11. *Well-saffroned.* Saffron is an Arab word (*zafaran*), and very small quantities of the herb are used in Persia as a spice. It has a strong, pungent taste.

27. *Nishapur to Sebzevah.* *Nishapur*, or *Nishapoor*, is a city in the northeastern part of Persia, in the province of Khorassan. It has a special trade in turquoises, obtained from mines to the northwest. *Sebzevah* (more commonly *Sabzawar*, or *Subzawar*) is a fortified town, sixty-five miles west of Nishapur. It has a good bazaar. It must not be confounded with Subzawur in Afghanistan, about a hundred miles south of Herat.

35. *Purslane.* A common plant with thick, succulent leaves.

Lupines. A large genus of the bean family. They are more used in Eastern countries than here as food for cattle.

38. *Doit.* A small Dutch coin, worth about a quarter of a cent. Cf. *Temp.* ii. 2. 33: "When they will not give a doit to relieve a lame beggar, they will lay out ten to see a dead Indian."

41. *Quoth that.* That is, the other camel.

43. *Simooms.* The hot winds so common and so destructive in the Arabian deserts.

46. *Chervil.* Literally "pleasant leaf;" another succulent plant.

50. *Heartened.* Encouraged. Cf. 3 *Henry VI.* ii. 2, 79: "And hearten those that fight in your defence."

57. *A brand.* A somewhat doubtful reward!

58. *Good-and-faithful-servant.* See *Matt.* xxv. 14 and *Luke*, xix. 12.

64. *Lilith.* It was a belief of the Talmudists that Adam had a wife, Lilith, before he married Eve, and that the children of this first marriage were devils. In the demonology of the Middle Ages, Lilith is a popular witch. She appears in Goethe's *Faust.* Finally the name has become a generic one for any beautiful and beguiling woman. Browning has a poem in *Dramatic Idylls* (second series) called *Adam, Lilith, and Eve.* It is, however, a modernized version of the situation in Eden.

89. Browning introduces several Hebrew lines in the *Fancies.* The transliteration and translation of this one are as follows:

Hāhinnam	yāré	Iyod	Elōhim.
for naught	doth fear	Job	God.

This passage is the last clause of *Job*, i. 9.

90. *In Persian phrase.* It is a Persian who is speaking; but there may be more in the expression than this. "The real learning of this pas-

sage," says a clergyman deeply read in Jewish antiquity, "is not in its use of the Hebrew phrase, which is, indeed, a superficial pedantry, but in the natural, seemingly careless choice of the adjective *Persian*. That shows that Mr. Browning must be perfectly familiar with the immense literature of the controversy regarding the date and origin of the Book of Job. He might have said 'Hebrew phrase,' or 'Scripture phrase.' Either would have passed without challenge even from scholars. But he has reached the conclusion of the most skilful modern commentators that the Book of Job is a product of Persian civilization, and of much later date than has usually been supposed."

95. The Hebrew word in this line bears excellent evidence of being a misprint for the first word of the preceding Hebrew quotation, with the addition of the prefix "min" or "from." No vowels are represented in the printing of Hebrew words, and the omission of a dot like that in the first word of 89 makes a serious difficulty in the interpretation of a word. But the sense here is doubtless "A proper speech were this from God;" that is, from the Creator to the creature. For the ironical use of *proper*, cf. Shakespeare, *Much Ado*, iv. 1. 312: "A proper saying!" *Macbeth*, iv. 4. 60: "O proper stuff!" etc.

104. *At man's indifference.* God is more likely to be displeased at man's indifference to the beauties of the universe than at his absorption in them.

YOUTH AND ART.

The poem was published in *Dramatis Personæ* in 1864. It is an excellent miniature illustration of Mr. Browning's deepest human feeling,—the desire that each soul should work out its own individuality, and so its own salvation, by every means in its power. The man who is the creature of circumstance, of conventionality, who hesitates and trembles before his own impulses, is a contemptible creature in the eyes of the poet. *The Statue and the Bust* is a larger development of the same theme. To see a great, noble emotion within reach, and to sit in the arm-chair of conventionality while it passes by, is a crime whose punishment will be eternal.

"So! while these wait the trump of doom
How do their spirits pass, I wonder,
Nights and days in the narrow room?

"Still, I suppose, they sit and ponder
What a gift life was, ages ago,
Six steps out of the chapel yonder.

"Surely they see not God, I know,
Nor all that chivalry of His,
The soldier-saints who, row on row,

"Burn upward each to his point of bliss—
Since, the end of life being manifest,
He had cut his way thro' the world to this." *

* *The Statue and the Bust* (in *Men and Women*, p. 121).

8. *Gibson*, John (1791-1866). A pupil of Canova and Thorwaldsen. His most famous sculpture is The Wounded Amazon.

12. *Grisi*, Giulia (1810-1869). An Italian singer, the most famous of her time.

58. *Bals-parés.* Dress balls.

60. *R.A.* Member of the Royal Academy of Art.

SONG

FROM "A BLOT IN THE 'SCUTCHEON."

A Blot in the 'Scutcheon is the fourth in the series of *Dramas*, and was published in 1843. This song from it is so unique, not only among Browning's poems, but in the literature of our language, that we extract and insert it here, in violation of our principle that no mutilated poems shall appear in the book.

MAY AND DEATH.

Mrs. Orr says of this poem: "It was a personal utterance, provoked by the death of a relative whom Mr. Browning dearly loved."

It first appeared in *The Keepsake* for 1857, edited by Miss Power. It was reprinted with some new readings in *Dramatis Personæ*, 1864.

8. *Moon-births.* The 1st ed. has "Moon's birth."

9-10. *So, for their sake*, etc. The 1st ed. reads:

> "So, for their sake, prove May till May!
> Let their new time, like mine of old," etc.

15. *Save a sole streak.* The 1st ed. has "Except a streak."

19. *But I*, etc. The 1st ed. has "And I,—whene'er the plant is there," etc.

MY STAR.

With *My Star* we begin a series of five poems addressed at one time and another to Mrs. Browning. The first two were published during her life, the last three after her death. Browning has written many others under the same inspiration. These are selected as the most typical, if not the most beautiful. Curiously enough, two of them have been mistaken by some critics for addresses to Christ. The blunder is not inconceivable in *Prospice*, but how one could so misinterpret the Invocation, "O lyric Love," is mysterious. However, Browning will wait long to suffer what Shakespeare has suffered at the hands of commentators.

My Star was published in *Men and Women* in 1855.

4. *Like the angled spar.* *Spar* is a generic word applied to any mineral which breaks into regular surfaces, and reflects the light, or has, as we say, lustre.

9. *Dartles.* A frequentative of *dart*, probably of the poet's own coinage. It is not in Worc. or Wb. The Supplement of the *Imp. Dict.* gives it, with this passage as illustration.

10. *Like a bird.* For Browning's poetic feeling for birds, see note on *Pippa Passes.*

ONE WORD MORE.

This poem concludes *Men and Women*, the volume of short pieces published in 1855. There were fifty poems besides this. The warm, personal feeling which Browning shows in it increases the interest which the beauty of the work alone would inspire.

5. *A century of sonnets.* The name of the lady to whom these sonnets are addressed is not positively known. In fact, the whole story is wrapped in a romantic mist. According to the records of the Abate Melchior Missivini, she was Margarita, the daughter of a Roman baker. A small house in the Strada Santa Dorotea is still shown as her birthplace. The meeting of Raphael with her is described by the abate, and, if we may believe him, it was a full-fledged love from the first moment.

Such of the sonnets as remain are scrawled on various sketches for the "Disputa"—the famous painting of the Vatican. One sketch with sonnet is in the British Museum. The sonnet is, it must be confessed, poor enough poetry and most voluptuous sentiment. An interesting pamphlet on this treasure is "*Rafaello Sanzio. His Sonnet in the British Museum*, Studied by Louis Fagan." The most complete transcript of the sonnets is in Grimm's *Life of Raphael.*

21. *Madonnas.* Raphael painted no less than fifty.

22. *Her, San Sisto names, and her, Foligno.* The *Madonna di San Sisto*, or Sistine Madonna, so called from the representation of St. Sixtus with St. Barbara in the lower part of the picture, is in the Dresden Gallery. The *Madonna di Foligno*, now in the Vatican, was painted in 1512 for the church of Ara Coeli in Rome, but was removed in 1565 to Foligno, a view of which city appears in the background of the picture.

23. *Her that visits Florence in a vision.* Probably the *Madonna del Granduca*, a work of Raphael's Florentine period, formerly in the palace of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, but now in the Pitti Gallery. Passavant, in his *Life of Raphael*, says of it: "The bold, commanding, and luminous style in which the painting stands out from the background makes the figure and divine expression of the head still more impressive. Thanks to all these qualities united, this Madonna *produces the effect of a supernatural apparition* [the italics are ours]. In short, it is one of the masterpieces of Raphael."

24. *Her that's left with lilies in the Louvre.* Apparently the Madonna known as *La Belle Jardinière*, from the fact that the Virgin is represented as seated in a garden, with lilies among the flowers of it. In the *Madonna of Francis I.*, also in the Louvre, an angel is scattering flowers over the Mother and Child, but they do not seem to be lilies, though Grimm (*Life of Raphael*) or his translator calls them so.

27. *Guido Reni.* Born in 1575. The book must, accordingly, have

come to him through the hands of some one who knew Raphael, as the latter died in 1520.

33. *Beatrice.* Beatrice Portinari was the first and only love of Dante. Tradition says that he was but nine years old when he met her, and that he loved her faithfully during his whole life. About 1290 he wrote the *Vita Nuova*, which embodies and commemorates his love for her. She died at twenty-four. So completely has Dante spiritualized and refined his passion, that recent critics begin to doubt that Beatrice was a real woman.

35. *A pen corroded.* Dante in his *Inferno* immortalized many a Florentine by giving him a conspicuous place among the damned. He has been charged with gratifying personal spite upon some of these unfortunate victims; but Browning evidently thinks otherwise.

38. *Stigma.* A brand, especially one of disgrace.

57. *Bice.* A tender diminutive of *Beatrice;* pronounced like *beechy.*

73. *Heaven's gift takes earth's abatement.* Fame itself brings pain to the genius who gives his treasures reluctantly into the world's keeping.

74. *Smites the rock.* Cf. *Numb.* xx.

92. *The 'customed prelude.* Three times, certainly, before Moses smote the rock for water, he had delivered the Israelites from some dire distress. Moses, however, is used here rather as a type of saviours than as an individual.

95. *Egypt's flesh-pots.* Cf. *Exod.* xvi. 3. "Since the miracle gives us nothing better than water, we might better have suffered the drought, which gave us at least a warrant for murmuring."

96. *Sinai-forehead's.* Browning uses with German freedom these awkward compounds. Cf. *Exod.* xxxiv. 29.

98. *Right-arm's rod-sweep.* Cf. *Numb.* xx. 11.

101. *Jethro's daughter.* Zipporah, the wife of Moses. Cf. *Exod.* ii. 21, iii. 1, iv. 18.

111. *All-express.* Another Germanism.

122. *The liberal hand.* Accustomed to the free, bold work of fresco-painting.

125. *Missal-marge.* The margin of a prayer-book; in the olden time often exquisitely adorned with delicate painting.

136. *Karshish, Cleon, Norbert.* For the change from "Karshook" to *Karshish*, see introductory note on *Ben Karshook's Wisdom*, p. 169, above. *Karshish* is the writer of *An Epistle Containing the Strange Medical Experience of Karshish, the Arab Physician* (in *Men and Women*, p. 65). *Cleon* is the hero of the poem of that name (*Id.* p 202). Norbert is the hero of *In a Balcony* (*Id.* p. 217).

138. *Lippo, Roland, or Andrea.* *Lippo* is the painter in *Fra Lippo Lippi* (in *Men and Women*, p. 25). For *Roland*, see "*Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came.*" *Andrea* is *Andrea del Sarto* (in *Men and Women*, p. 184).

145. *Here in London*, etc. The Brownings lived in Italy during most of their married life, only coming to London when forced to do so by business.

148. *Fiesole.* The town lies on the height to the north of Florence, and three miles away.

150. *Samminiato.* The ancient Church of San Miniato, on the hill to the east of Florence, and very conspicuous from many points in the city. *Samminiato* is the softened popular pronunciation of the name.

158. *Could love a mortal.* As she loved Endymion.

160. *Mythos.* The Greek word of which *myth* is a contraction.

161. *Turn a new side*, etc. The moon always turns the same side to the earth. Of the other side we know nothing.

163. *Zoroaster.* The probably mythical founder of the Persian religion, and compiler of the sacred books of the Zend-Avesta. The Persian worship of light and heat made the sun and the moon the objects of their most solemn ceremonials.

165. *Keats—him even.* The chaste moon should reveal herself, if to any one, to the man who wrote *The Eve of St. Agnes*, with its matchless pictures of moonlight.

Browning has always a peculiar tone of tenderness and admiration for Shelley and Keats. They were his first loves among the poets. At thirteen, he found some stray poems by Shelley, and was greatly stirred by them. He procured with difficulty all the rest of Shelley's works, and at the same time three small volumes of Keats. Neither of the poets was much read at the time. They undoubtedly had a large influence in determining the direction of Browning's activity. Cf. *Memorabilia* (in *Men and Women*, p. 183):

> "Ah, did you once see Shelley plain,
> And did he stop and speak to you?"

170. *Upon the ship it founders.* Goddess loves have sometimes proved disastrous.

171. *Crystals.* Some of the English editions print "chrystals;" but Browning, who lays so much stress on spelling Greek proper names in the Greek way, cannot be responsible for this obsolete orthography.

174. *Moses, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu.* See *Exod.* xxiv. 9 fol.: Then went up Moses, and Aaron, and Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness." The Revised Version has "As it were the very heaven for clearness."

179. *When they ate*, etc. See *Exod.* xxiv. 11.

PROSPICE.

The title of the poem means simply "Look forward." It was first published in 1864 in *Dramatis Personæ.*

"A noble poem. Face the last fight with Death. Yours the Gain" (Furnivall).

7. *In a visible form.* All the eds. put a comma after *form*, but the mark of interrogation is more in accordance with rule and usage, as the question proper ends here, though the connection of thought with what follows is very close.

27. *O thou soul*, etc. The poet never loses an opportunity for an exquisite allusion to the lost love.

INVOCATION.

This poem concludes the Introduction to *The Ring and the Book* (1868–69). Furnivall points out that a certain Mr. George McCrie, in a work called *The Religion of Our Literature*, states that "Though 'Lyric Love' is here a quality personified, it seems to be so interchangeably with Christ." It is the fashion among a certain class of sentimentalists to twist Browning's lines to his wife into addresses to Christ. But this is really an ap"lling irreverence (see first two lines). Perhaps, however, Mr. McCrie thinks that no one but Christ ever came to earth "To toil for man, to suffer, and to die."

4. *Took sanctuary*, etc. To *take sanctuary* was the legal term for taking refuge in a *sanctuary*, or asylum in which a person was privileged from persecution or arrest. Cf. Shakespeare, *Rich. III.* iii. 1. 27:

> "The queen your mother and your brother York
> Have taken sanctuary;"

that is, in the Sanctuary at Westminster (within the precincts of the Abbey), which retained its privileges until the dissolution of the monastery. In the *Comedy of Errors* Antipholus of Ephesus takes refuge in the priory, and the abbess refuses to give him up (v. 1. 914):

> "he took this place for sanctuary
> And it shall privilege him from your hands."

For a figurative use of the phrase, cf. Dryden (quoted in *Imp. Dict.*): "The admirable works of painting were made fuel for the fire; but some reliques of it took sanctuary under ground, and escaped the common destiny."

7. *When the first summons*, etc. Cf. Mrs. Browning, *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, vii.:

> "The face of all the world is changed, I think,
> Since first I heard the footsteps of thy soul
> Move still, oh, still, beside me; as they stole
> Betwixt me and the dreadful outer brink
> Of obvious death, where I who thought to sink
> Was caught up into love and taught the whole
> Of life in a new rhythm."

14. *Who best taught song*, etc. Cf. *Sonnets from Portuguese*, xvii.:

> "My poet, thou canst touch on all the notes
> God set between his After and Before,
> And strike up and strike off the general roar
> Of the rushing worlds a melody that floats
> In a serene air purely. Antidotes
> Of medicated music, answering for
> Mankind's forlornest uses, thou canst pour
> From thence into their ears. God's will devotes
> Thine to such ends, and mine to wait on thine.
> How, Dearest, wilt thou have me for most use?

A hope, to sing by gladly? or a fine
Sad memory, with thy songs to interfuse?
A shade in which to sing—of palm or pine?
A grave on which to rest from singing? Choose."

16. *Despite the distance and the dark.* Cf. Mrs. Browning, *Vision of Poets:*

"Let the bloom
Of Life grow over, undenied,
This bridge of Death, which is not wide."

20. *Never conclude.* *The Ring and the Book* has another allusion and dedication to "Lyric Love" in its last lines. The connection is too close to allow citation.

23. *So blessing back,* etc. This is one of the most obscurely constructed passages in Browning. The difficulty lies in the peculiar use of "blessing" with the adverb "back." The sense, however, of the whole passage from line 13 is this: "May I never begin my song without a prayer for thy inspiring presence,—never conclude that song without rendering thanks to that heaven to which eyes that can not reach yet yearn. So shall I send blessing in turn to that half-seen, half-dreamed whiteness in the heaven which may be thy face, that "wanness where, I think, thy foot may fall."

A WALL.

This poem, which the author entitles *A Wall* in the *Selections from Robert Browning's Poems, Second Series,* published in 1880, was written and printed as the Prologue to *Pacchiarotto and How he Worked in Distemper,* published in 1876. It is another expression of the poet's unconquerable desire to pierce the darkness which separates earth from that life which is to come. We never understood the poem until we lived for a summer month in sight of a high, brick, windowless, vine-grown wall. The half-mysterious flutter of the foliage might stimulate a more sluggish imagination than that of Browning to fancy a subtle connection between vine without and soul within the wall.

5. *Lush.* A curious word. It is a contraction of *luscious,* and a doublet of *lusty.* Shakespeare (*M. N. D.* ii. 1. 251) uses *luscious* in the sense of luxuriant in growth: "Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine" (where some editors substitute "lush"), and *lush* in combination with *lusty* in *Temp.* ii. 1. 52: "How lush and lusty the grass looks." Cf. also Tennyson, *Dream of Fair Women,* 71: "through lush green grasses," etc.

13. *And there again!* Recurring to the *pulsation* of 9 above; an excellent phrase for the subtle, indescribable thrill and quiver which runs through a mass of leaves.

17. *Wall upon wall are.* A "construction according to sense" rather than syntax, which would require "is."

PROEM TO DRAMATIC IDYLLS (SECOND SERIES).

The second series of *Dramatic Idylls* was published in 1880.

Compare these lines with *Hamlet*, iii. 2. 339 fol.: "Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of me! You would play upon me; you would seem to know my stops; you would pluck out the heart of my mystery; you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass: and there is much music, excellent voice in this little organ; yet cannot you make it speak. 'Sblood, do you think I am easier to be played on than a pipe?"

6. *The lights.* The organs of breathing. The word is properly applied only to the lungs of brute animals. Of course its use here is a part of the mockery of the passage.

PIPPA PASSES.

"The most simple and varied of Browning's plays—that which shows every side of his genius, has most lightness and strength, and, all in all, may be termed a representative poem—is the beautiful drama with the quaint title of *Pippa Passes*. It is a cluster of four scenes, with prologue, epilogue, and interludes; half prose, half poetry, varying with the refinement of the dialogue. Pippa is a delicately pure, good, blithesome peasant maid. ''T is but a little black-eyed, pretty singing Felippa, gay silk-winding girl,'—though with token, ere the end, that she is child of a nobleman, put out of the way by a villain, Maffeo, at instigation of the next heir. Pippa knows nothing of this, but is piously content with her life of toil. It is New-Year's day at Asolo. She springs from bed, in her garret chamber, at sunrise, resolved to enjoy to the full her sole holiday. She will not 'squander a wavelet' of it, not a 'mite of her twelve hours' treasure.' Others can be happy throughout the year: haughty Ottima and Sebald, the lovers on the hill; Jules and Phene, the artist and his bride; Luigi and his mother; Monsignor, the Bishop; but Pippa has only this one day to enjoy. She envies these great ones a little, but reflects that God's love is best after all. And yet, how little can she do! How can she possibly affect the world? Thus she muses, and goes out, singing, to her holiday and the sunshine. Now, it so happens that she passes, this day, each of the groups of persons we have named, at an important crisis in their lives, and they hear her various carols as she trills them forth in the innocent gladness of her heart. Sebald and Ottima have murdered the latter's aged husband, and are unremorseful in their guilty love. Jules is the victim of a fraud practised by his rival artists, who have put in his way a young girl, a paid model, whom he believes to be a pure and cultured maiden. He has married her, and just discovered the imposture. Luigi is hesitating whether to join a patriotic con-

spiracy. Monsignor is tempted by Maffeo to overlook his late brother's murder, for the sake of the estates, and to utterly ruin Pippa. . . .

"All these persons are vitally affected—have their lives changed—merely by Pippa's weird and suggestive songs, coming, as if by accident, upon their hearing at the critical moment. With certain reservations this is a strong and delicate conception, admirably worked" (Stedman, *Victorian Poets*, p. 315 fol.).

It is most important, in order to judge the work of a poet with fairness or even with intelligence, that we should be able to measure him by his own standard. In plain English, we must know what he means to do. This seems so axiomatic as to be superfluous statement; but much recent criticism fails to hit the mark, because it fails to distinguish between the artist's conception and the artist's execution. It is sheer nonsense to scold Emerson because he does not write like Milton, or condemn George Eliot because she has not the method of Fielding.

The first question to be asked about Mr. Browning's dramas, then, is not "How do they compare with the dramas of Shakespeare?" but rather "What is their conception?" or, if we like, "How do they compare in conception with those of Shakespeare?" Let us concede at the outset that the mere passage of three hundred years will have a tendency to alter some of the forms which were thought fundamental in the Elizabethan drama. For example, it is true that Shakespeare makes all his persons speak *in character*. So excellent a critic as Mr. Stedman falls into the error of judging Browning's work by the standard of the old demand. He says of *Pippa Passes*, "The usual fault is present: the characters, whether students, peasants, or soldiers, all talk like sages; Pippa reasons like a Paracelsus in pantalettes,—her intellectual songs are strangely put in the mouth of an ignorant, silk-winding girl; Phene is more natural, though mature even for Italy, at fourteen. Browning's children are old as himself; he rarely sees them objectively." Now the simple fact that Pippa does not speak in the least like a mill-girl is evident to the most cursory reader of ten lines of her opening soliloquy. Surely what one who runs may read cannot have escaped Mr. Browning's attention. He knows that there is no verisimilitude in his dramas. He lives in a world of plain men and women and he knows how they talk, as scores of his poems testify. It must be, then, that this departure from actual dialect is deliberate. Whether we like or approve it or not, here it is, to be accounted for. It may seem arrogance to attempt to explain the method of a living poet, but nothing else remains as reply to such a criticism.

In his *Essay on Shelley*, Browning speaks of one class of poets as striving towards "Not what man sees, but what God sees." This seems the key to the whole matter. Browning does not try to represent the facts of life as they appear to the man who is not a poet. That can be done in prose. If photography be the ultimate art, then we may as well be done at once with painting and sculpture. But, like the other fine arts, poetry is born to express that most difficult of expression—the inexpressible, as we say. So when Browning's great, full, rich soliloquy springs from the lips of the silk-winding girl, it aims to be simply the truest ex-

pression of all the wild, free joys and quivering fears which press upon her heart unuttered. She is a dumb creature. In point of fact, she could not voice one of those million emotions. But poetry has come that the human heart may have speech. Like the gospel, it preaches liberty to the captive. The poet sees as God sees, and says as God might say.

Once granting the poet's right to such a method, we shall be broader critics. It is by such a standard that Browning's claims judgment.

Of course dramas constructed on this theory will not succeed on the stage. Mr. Browning's have not succeeded. The moment actual men and women begin to speak the words which the poet puts into their mouths, the discrepancy appears between their speech and their power of speech. There is a fatal confusion of two artistic methods. But let the lines tell their own story, in the closet, and Pippa and Ottima and Colombe and Gerald and Chiappino will become more real than any mere external verisimilitude could make them. For these creatures are learned, and recognized not by their clothes, but by their souls.

The author's dedication of the drama is as follows:

I DEDICATE

MY BEST INTENTIONS, IN THIS POEM, MOST ADMIRINGLY TO THE AUTHOR OF "ION,"—

MOST AFFECTIONATELY TO

MR. SERGEANT TALFOURD.

R. B.

Asolo, the scene of the drama, is nineteen miles northwest of Treviso, and somewhat more than thirty miles from Venice. It is finely situated on a hill, and is encircled by a wall flanked with towers. It has an old cathedral, and the ruins of a Roman aqueduct. Silk-growing and spinning are the chief industries of the region. In the country between Trent and Verona, 120,000 pounds of silk are annually produced.

PROLOGUE. — 1. *Day*. The lengthening and hastening lines are descriptive of the rapid dawn.

20. *Asolo*. The accent properly falls on the second syllable, but Browning puts it on the first. Cf. 42 and 64 below.

40. *Feel*. Used in Middle English in the sense of feeling, and colloquially so now.

45. *Her Sebald's homage*. For the argument of the play, and summary of each episode, see the extract from Stedman's *Victorian Poets* above.

62. *Monsignor*. A bishop, as well as lord of his brother's estates.

88. *Martagon*. A species of lily (*Lilium martagon*).

89. *St. Agnes*. She was a virgin martyr of the 4th century. She was remarkable for her beauty, and excited the admiration of all the noble youth of Rome; but she resolved to live as the spouse of Christ, and at last died rather than give herself in marriage. She is kept in the memory of the world of letters, if in no other way, by Keats's poem, *The Eve of St. Agnes*. Pippa has in mind some picture in the cathedral.

94. *Dusk green universe.* The depths of ocean. Cf. "Swart green," ii. 51 below.

100. *Weevil and chafer.* Small, destructive insects of the beetle family. The latter is more commonly called the cockchafer.

102. *Gibe.* Flout. Cf. Shakespeare, *A. and C.* ii. 2. 74:

> "and with taunts
> Did gibe my missive out of audience."

120. *Luca.* The decrepit and hated husband of Ottima.

131. *Possagno church.* Possagno was the birthplace of Canova, and the church was designed by him. It is in the form of a circular temple. It contains his tomb, and an altar-piece by him. As Possagno is but four miles from Asolo, and as the memory of Canova is worshipped in all the region, nothing could be more natural than that a wedding—especially that of an artist—should take place in that church.

166. *Our turret.* Probably one of the ruined towers of the old walls.

169. *Each to each.* The mother and Luigi, not the lizards.

170. *As brooding bird to bird.* Browning is especially happy in his observation of birds. Cf. *Home Thoughts from Abroad:*

> "That 's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over,
> Lest you should think he never could recapture
> The first, fine, careless rapture."

Stedman says of that passage: "Having in mind Shakespeare and Shelley, I nevertheless think [these] lines the finest ever written touching the song of a bird."

181. *The Palace by the Dome.* The cathedral (*Duomo* or *Dome*) and its adjoining Bishop's Palace are in the centre of the town.

197. *More pain that this,* etc. The American ed. copies the English misprint of "than" for *that.*

213. *Cicala.* Italian for *cicada,* a genus of insects remarkable for the loud shrill sounds they make.

SCENE I.—"To my thinking, there is no grander passage in literature than that tremendous scene between Ottima and her paramour in *Pippa Passes;* no one accuses the author of that, and of *The Ring and the Book,* of neglecting love or overlooking the body; and yet I do daily homage to the genius of Robert Browning" (Robert Buchanan *).

4. *Your Rhineland nights.* There is an especial dramatic purpose in making Sebald a German. The Italian temperament would not be capable of so strong a reaction as he suffers.

28. *St. Mark's.* The cathedral at Venice, about thirty miles away. The *belfry* is the lofty *campanile* of the church, the highest tower in the city. It is a fact that Venice, Vicenza, and Padua can be seen from the hill of Asolo in clear weather. *Vicenza* is about twenty-five miles to the southwest, and *Padua* about the same distance directly south.

45. *His blood.* Cf. *Macbeth* (ii. 2. 31) for another illustration of the effect of crime in forcing the mind to dwell upon so trivial a matter as mere words.

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* *The Fleshly School of Poetry and Other Phenomena of the Day,* by Robert Buchanan (London, 1872).

54. *Wittol.* Properly, a *willing* cuckold. Cf. Shakespeare, *M. W.* ii. 2. 313: "Cuckold! wittol-cuckold! the devil himself hath not such a name."

56. *Black?* The mere sight of the dark wine repels him with its suggestion of blood.

58. *Duomo.* The cathedral. See on prol. 181 above.

59. *Capuchin.* A monk of the order of St. Francis.

76. *Proof-mark.* The sign which shows a print to have been an early product of the press before the plate is worn by repeated impressions.

80. *Coil.* Ado, "fuss." Cf. Shakespeare, *T. G. of V.* i. 2. 99: "Here is a coil with protestation!"

116. *He is turned.* There is a superstition that the face of a murdered man always looks skyward for vengeance.

119. *Four gray hairs.* Ottima's age is probably greater than Sebald's. See 228 below.

167. *Campanula's chalice.* A large genus of bell-shaped flowers (Lat. *campanula*, little bell).

185. *Swift ran the searching tempest overhead.* Cf. Browning's other description of a thunderstorm in *The Ring and The Book* (*The Pope*, 2118):

> "I stood at Naples once, a night so dark
> I could have scarce conjectured there was earth
> Anywhere, sky or sea or world at all:
> But the night's black was burst through by a blaze—
> Thunder struck blow on blow, earth groaned and bore,
> Through her whole length of mountain visible:
> There lay the city thick and plain with spires,
> And, like a ghost disshrouded, white the sea."

The later passage is usually regarded as the finer, and it has a tremendous ethical force in its connection. But nothing can be more wonderful as a leap of the imagination than

> "Plunged and replunged his weapon at a venture."

INTERLUDE I.—In each scene, or true episode, of the drama, Pippa appears. Not only does she speak or sing in each, but her presence is subtly felt and her appearance expected throughout. But the interludes are partly by way of explanation and partly for contrast and relief. Three of them are in prose, and they are all in a much lower key than the body of the drama.

9. *Giovacchino.* A poet whom these fellows rail at is sure to have some fine qualities. The situation so sneeringly depicted is simply that of honorable flight from a passion either unworthy or impossible.

13. *Trieste.* At the head of the gulf of the same name—the northwestern extremity of the Adriatic.

14. *Bluphocks.* The only unredeemed villain whom Browning has created. See interlude ii. 1 below.

18. *Æsculapius, an Epic,* etc. All these gibes are directed against an honor too fine to enjoy any passion without regard to consequences. Giovacchino has undertaken to cure himself of love by the judicious course of running away. Forthwith he is ridiculed by these fellows for treating love as if it were a disease, instead of enjoying it boldly, be it

worthy or unworthy. They suggest that his epic shall have for its hero Æsculapius, the god of medicine, and that various divinities be called in to assist in the cure of the lovesick victim.

27. *Et canibus nostris.* And to our dogs. The quotation is from Virgil, *Ecl.* iii. 67: "Notior ut jam sit canibus non Delia nostris."

33. *In a tale.* Bound to tell one story. Cf. Shakespeare, *Much Ado*, iv. 2. 28: "Fore God, they are both in a tale."

39. *Alone.* That is, without the new bride.

56. *Canova's women.* See on prol. 131 above.

85. *Psiche-fanciulla.* Canova's Psyche (*Psiche*) was first placed in the Residenz at Munich, and afterwards moved to the gallery at Possagno. *Fanciulla* is Italian for young girl.

89. *Pietà.* Shortly before Canova's death he worked a colossal marble statue of Religion, and a Pietà (the Mother with the dead Christ in her arms) for the church in Possagno.

106. *Malamocco.* A small town on the long sandy island of the same name (also known as the *Lido*) which forms part of the boundary of the harbor of Venice.

107. *Alciphron.* A Greek epistolary writer, supposed to have lived about 200 A.D. He represented social customs of various sorts in fictitious letters, the style of which is admired as of Attic purity.

111. *Lire.* Plural of *lira*, the Italian equivalent of the French *franc*, and=18.6 cents in our money.

113. *Tydeus.* A Homeric hero who led an expedition against Thebes. He killed his arch-enemy, Melanippus, but was himself fatally wounded. As he lay on the ground, Athena appeared to him with a divine remedy, which was to heal his wound, and also make him immortal. But Amphiaraus cut off the head of Melanippus, brought it to him, and Tydeus ate the brain. This so disgusted Athena that she did not apply the remedy, and Tydeus died, the victim of his own hate.

Academy. The Academy of Fine Arts at Venice.

116. *Fenice.* Phenix; the name of the leading theatre in Venice.

135. *Hannibal Scratchy.* A burlesque of the name of the famous Italian painter, Annibale Caracci.

150. *The little girl.* Pippa.

SCENE II.—26. *Psyche's robe.* Psyche (the soul) was the daughter of a king. She was hated by Venus, but loved by Cupid. He at last made her his wife, after having gained for her immortality.

39. *Minion.* A favorite. Cf. Shakespeare, *Cymb.* ii. 3. 39:

> "The exile of her minion is too new:
> She hath not yet forgot him."

Coluthus. One of the late Greek epic poets of the 6th century. Most of his works are lost, but a poem on "The Rape of Helen" was discovered by *Bessarion* in Calabria.

40. *Bistre.* A dark-brown paint, made from the soot of wood.

Bessarion's scribe. John Bessarion (1395–1472) was a learned Greek cardinal. He was noted for his accurate and elegant scholarship, and his enthusiasm for Greek learning.

it is even flame-like when the passion of the workman wakes an answering passion."

117. *Tush.* The use of this word alone would suffice to break the charm.

181. *I am a painter*, etc. The verses composed to reveal the hellish plot are, as Lutwyche says, "slow, involved, mystical." The plain thought in them is that he has planned to make his hate most effective by striking at Jules through his love. Jules has married Phene believing her to have great personal beauty, a pure and childlike heart, and a strong intellect. The letters have been cunningly contrived to make the deception complete. Now these verses, as they come brokenly from Phene's lips, reveal to him that his wife is removed by every experience of her life from his dream of her. Her beauty remains; but her mind has never existed, and her purity has been ruined by the hideous schemes of Natalia and Lutwyche.

253. *Give her but the least excuse to love me.* Perhaps the best commentary on this song would be the lines of Berington—so inferior poetically, and yet having that simplicity which gives value to a commentary:

"'T is very hard to give no gift,
To yearn and yet to bide."

But cf. 275 fol. below for the condensed sentiment of the song.

257. *To eternally reprove.* This separation of the *to* of the infinitive from the verb is condemned by the grammars, but has the sanction of many good writers.

266. *All this.* Queenship.

270. *Jesses.* Straps of leather or silk, fitted round the legs of a hawk, to which the line held in the falconer's hand is attached. Cf. *Othello*, iii. 3. 261:

"Though her jesses were my dear heart-strings,
I 'd whistle her off and let her down the wind,
To prey at fortune."

272. *The Cornaro.* The old castle at Asolo, built in the 13th century, was the residence of Caterina Cornaro, the last queen of Cyprus, after she resigned her kingdom to the Venetians in 1489.

276. *The grace of her.* Her favor. Cf. Shakespeare, *M. for M.* iv. 3. 140:

"And you shall have your bosom on this wretch,
Grace of the duke, revenges to your heart,
And general honours."

290. *The visionary butterfly.* The symbol of the soul, and naturally of immortality.

306. *Henceforth.* From *that* time. The use with a past tense is peculiar.

Ancona. A city on the east coast of Italy, the capital of a province of the same name. It is beautiful for situation, and the region roundabout is among the loveliest in Italy.

318. *To begin art afresh.* Cf. iv. 45 fol. below.

INTERLUDE II.—1. *Bluphocks.* The foot-note on this name is apparently Browning's half-apology for creating a character of so unmixed evil

We supposed there could be but one interpretation of this character, and of the remarkable foot-note which concerns it. But we find ourselves at issue with Miss E. D. West in her understanding of the passage. She says ("One Aspect of Browning's Villains," *Browning Society Papers*, Part IV. p. 430):

"The vagabond Bluphocks is shown to us rather as a tool in the hands of a wicked man, than as a villain prompted by any evil motives of his own. No moral sense in him appears to be awake. The broad fact of this world being patent before him, that the sun does 'rise on the evil and the good, and the rain fall on the just and the unjust,' he feels no need to concern himself with any differences between them. Knocking about in the world, he *must* make a livelihood somehow; he is as *un*moral as a professional London thief might be. His pocket full of zwanzigers, the payment given by the Intendant of the Bishop, for the innocent Pippa's intended ruin, are [is] to Bluphocks not the price of blood, but simply zwanzigers,—coins which will keep him afloat, and in the ease of carelessness as long as they last; and then some other like bit of lucky chance may come to him."

Surely the foot-note cannot be intended as the key to Bluphocks's inner character, but as a plea for our tolerance of him in the drama. It is not what he thinks of us which Browning needs tell us, but what we are to think of him. Miss West believes that to be *un*moral is better than to be *im*moral. But human nature disagrees with her. Nothing is more revolting to the world—which does not itself pretend to over-much morality—than some creature with no apparent sense of obligation. This demand expresses itself in such proverbs as "There 's honour even among thieves." Now Bluphocks has not even one fluttering shred of honor. He may not be malicious, but if not, it is because malignity is too much trouble. To expect from him one spark of compassion would be to expect fire from water. The Intendant, whom Miss West thinks the type of the unmitigated villain, at least spared the life of Pippa when her father ordered her murdered.

We are content to give Bluphocks place as Browning's one embodiment of pure intellectual knavery. He is, as the Intendant confesses, "a handsome scoundrel." Even on such, Browning reminds us, God maketh his sun to rise and his rain to fall.

2. *Intendant's money.* The bribe of Maffeo, the superintendent in charge of the estate which the Bishop has just inherited from his brother. As will presently appear, Maffeo plots to put Pippa out of the way. He expects to find the new master as ready to his villainous purpose as the old has been. It may be well to explain, here, that Pippa is really heiress of the estate.

8. *Grig.* A cricket; a common metaphor for incessant activity. Cf. Tennyson, *The Brook*, 54: "High-elbowed grigs that leap in summer grass." It is worth notice that the phrase "As merry as a grig" is a corruption of "As merry as a Greek."

10. *Armenian.* The Armenian Church separated itself from the Roman Church in 491. It has a pope (Catholicos) to whose palace every Armenian must make a pilgrimage once in his life. The Armenians believe in the worship of the saints, but not in purgatory. They are especial-

ly rigid in the observance of fasts. Perhaps that is the reason Bluphocks admires them so much.

11. *Koenigsberg.* A city of Eastern Prussia, the third in size in the dominion.

Prussia Improper. The arm of land bounded on the north by the Baltic and on the south by Poland was long called "Prussia Proper," to distinguish it from the other provinces of the kingdom. Koenigsberg is just over the boundary of Brandenburg.

14. *Chaldee.* A Semitic dialect, in which parts of the books of *Daniel* and *Ezra* were written.

19. *Syriac.* The common language of Western Asia from the third to the eighth century. By the nineteenth century it had disappeared, except as the ecclesiastical language in the Syrian churches.

20. *Vowels.* The Syriac has five vowels denoted by the Greek vowels inverted. Bluphocks would be likely to remember those after he had forgotten the more difficult consonants.

21. *Celarent, Darii, Ferio.* "Barbara, Celarent, Darii, Ferioque, prioris," is the first of five mnemonic lines used by logicians to designate the nineteen valid forms of the syllogism.

23. *Posy.* A verse of poetry, a motto. The word is a contraction of "poesy." Its sense of "flower" or "nosegay" is derived from the fact that flowers were often used symbolically, as they still are in the East. Cf. Tract 1422 of Heber's MSS., called "A New Yeares Guifte, or a posie made upon certain flowers presented to the Countess of Pembroke." For the sense in which it is here used, cf. Shakespeare, *M. of V.* v. 1. 148:

> "A paltry ring
> That she did give me, whose posy was
> For all the world like cutler's poetry
> Upon a knife."

25. *Hocus-pocussed.* Juggled. The derivations usually given to explain this word are absurd. It is simply the invention of the player of tricks.

Fly and locust. Cf. *Exod.* viii. 20 and x. 4.

How to Jonah, etc. Cf. *Jonah,* i. This rhyme is a perfunctory one, since the Lord specifically wished Jonah not to go to Tarshish, and to go to Nineveh.

27. *How the angel,* etc. Cf. *Numb.* xxii. 22 fol.

31. *Bishop Beveridge.* The pun upon the name is evident. Bishop Beveridge (1636-1707) was a most exemplary, benevolent, and self-denying divine. He was a voluminous author, and an ardent Calvinist.

33. *Charon's wherry.* Charon, son of Erebus, carried the shades of the dead in his boat across the river Styx (the *Stygian ferry* of 37 below) in the lower world. For this he was paid with an *obolus* (a small Athenian coin), placed in the mouth of the corpse before burial.

34. *Lupine-seed.* A kind of pulse, an excellent food for an abstemious man,—hardly suitable for Bluphocks.

Hecate's supper. Hecate was a goddess of terrible appearance, and of multiple powers. She was much feared, and was thought to be propitiated by frequent gifts of food, put at the cross-roads.

37. *Zwanzigers.* An Austrian silver coin, of twenty kreutzers, or about fifteen cents.

46. *Prince Metternich.* A celebrated Austrian statesman (1773–1859). He was prime-minister from 1809 to 1848. This period includes the most stormy years of the reign of Napoleon. Metternich was a conservative, and a repressor. His policy was to keep down the various nationalities of the Austrian empire by means of each other. To him is attributed the saying "Après moi, le deluge!" Revolution broke out at Vienna in 1848. One of the first acts of the mob was to sack Metternich's palace. He fled to England, and never returned to public life.

48. *Draughts.* The game popularly known as "checkers."

53. *Panurge consults Hertrippa.* Panurge is one of the important personages in the romance of *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, by Rabelais (1483–1553). Panurge is a handsome, dashing, witty young man whom Pantagruel befriends and finally makes his chief adviser. He is full of all manner of drolleries, and especially delights in practical jokes. Panurge resolves upon marriage, and consults various people concerning the step. He wishes to know if it will be fortunate, and also wishes advice about the candidate for his affections. All the authorities discourage him. At last he goes to Hertrippa, philosopher, magician, and physician. Here he receives the most alarming predictions. For further details see Walter Besant's excellent book on Rabelais.*

King Agrippa. Cf. *Acts*, xxvi. 27.

55. *Your head and a ripe musk-melon.* The *head* being jocosely reckoned as worth nothing. For the turn of expression, cf. Shakespeare, *M. N. D.* v. 1. 293: "This passion [the lament of Bottom as Pyramus over the slain Thisbe] and the death of a dear friend would go near to make a man look sad." There is an old English proverbial saying in the same vein: "He that loseth his wife and sixpence hath lost a tester" (the *tester* being sixpence).

61. *That English fool's*, etc. There is no danger that the object of their watch may escape, as they gossip.

71. *Visa.* An endorsement made by the police upon a passport submitted to them for inspection, and found to be correct. *Deposed*=deposited; the etymological sense, now obsolete.

75. *Carbonari.* A secret organization which was trying at this time to liberate Italy from Austria's grasp. See on iii. 18 below.

76. *Spielberg.* A terrible Austrian prison, originally the citadel of Brunn in Moravia.

84. *Makes the signal.* Bluphocks is to point out Luigi to the police.

SCENE III.—6. *Lucius Junius.* Lucius Junius Brutus was leader of the revolt which drove the Tarquins from Rome, and founded the republic (509 B.C.). Cf. *J. C.* i. 2. 158. His name comes naturally to Luigi's lips, as he tries the echo, for he is meditating a deed similar to that which made Brutus immortal.

14. *Old Franz.* The Austrian emperor, Francis I. The early reading was "the scarlet comb; now hark—"

16. *Let him*, etc. She refers, of course, to the tyrant whom Luigi is to kill.

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* *Foreign Classics for English Readers. Rabelais*, by Walter Besant (Edinburgh, 879).

19. *Pellicos.* Silvio Pellico (1788–1854) was one of the Italian patriots who tried to free his country from the yoke of Austria. He was a member of the secret society of the Carbonari, was arrested as such, and confined eleven years in the prisons of Santa Margherita in Milan, of I Piombi at Venice, and finally of Spielberg. His famous work, *Le Mie Prigioni*, gives a most pathetic account of these years. At last, in 1830, he was set at liberty, and passed the rest of his life peacefully in literary pursuits.

30. *They visit night by night.* In dreams. This justifies the mother's hint that his mind is touched.

51. *Cicala.* See on prol. 213.

55. *I go this evening.* Cf. interlude ii. 69 fol. Of course the police have been misinformed.

99. *Coppice.* A copse, or wood of small growth.

115. *Blab.* To tell tales. Cf. *V.* and *A.* 126: "These blue-veined violets whereon we lean can never blab."

122. *Andrea, Pier, Gualtier.* Former conspirators against the Austrian tyranny.

135. *How first the Austrians got these provinces.* In the summer of 1813 the Austrian armies gained the greater part of northern Italy. The Congress of Vienna made one concession after another (this is the *treaty* of 138 below), untii in 1815 all the provinces were under the control of Austria.

148. "*I am the bright and morning-star.*" Cf. *Rev.* xxii. 16.

150. *The gift of the morning-star.* Cf. *Rev.* ii. 28.

151. *Chiara.* Luigi's betrothed.

156. *Leading his revel.* It is certainly rare to find June personified as masculine. For the changes the author has made here and elsewhere in the drama, see *Addenda* below.

163. *The Titian at Treviso.* There is an altar-piece by Titian in the Annunziata chapel of the Cathedral at Treviso.

164. *A king lived long ago.* This song was published in 1835. Six lines were added, and others altered when it was incorporated in *Pippa Passes* in 1841. Still other changes have since been made.

168. *Disparting.* An intensive form of *parting.*

174. *Bane.* The ed. of 1835 has: "Age with its pine."

172. *Got to a sleepy mood.* *Got* is here used in its frequent sense of begotten.

175. *The gods so loved him.* The ed. of 1835 has: "As though gods loved him."

177. *The king.* The ed. of 1835 has "that he."

184. *Haled.* Hauled, dragged. Cf. *Luke,* xii. 58, *Acts,* viii. 3. The ed. of 1835 has "some" for *rough* in 187.

189. *And sometimes clung,* etc. The four following lines were inserted in 1841. This line then read "Sometimes there clung about his feet." The present version appears first in Moxon's *Selections from Browning,* 1865.

193. *And sometimes from.* The 1st and 2d versions have "Sometimes from out."

[illegible]

[illegible] which [illegible] Sa[illegible]. [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] has:

[illegible]

[illegible] Morris's *Selections*, [illegible]

[illegible] A species of bird which lives upon [illegible]

[illegible] a great delicacy, and [illegible]

[illegible] twelve miles north of Vicenza, [illegible]

[illegible] A variety of apple.

Junetings. An early apple. Cf. Bacon, Essay 46, *On Gardens:* "In July come . . . plummes in fruit, ginnitings, quadlins." The word is often thought to be derived from the name of the month, but it is not so.

Leather-coat. An apple with a tough skin. The name is generally applied to the golden russet. Cf. Shakespeare, 2 *Henry IV.* v. 3. 44: "There 's a dish of leather-coats for you."

55. *Ortolans.* A singing bird, about the size of the lark. It is found in Europe, and esteemed a delicious food. Browning evidently appreciates them. Cf. *Prologue* to *Ferishtah's Fancies:*

"Pray, reader, have you eaten ortolans
    Ever in Italy?
Recall how cooks there cook them: for my plan 's
    To—Lyre with Spit ally.
They pluck the birds,—some dozen luscious lumps,
    Or more or fewer,—
Then roast them, heads by heads and rumps by rumps,
    Stuck on a skewer.
But first,—and here 's the point I fain would press,—
    Don't think I 'm tattling!—
They interpose, to curb its lusciousness,—
    What 'twixt each fatling?
First comes plain bread, crisp, brown, a toasted square:
    Then, a strong sage-leaf:
(So we find books with flowers dried here and there
    Lest leaf engage leaf.)
First, food—then, piquancy—and last of all
    Follows the thirdling:
Through wholesome hard, sharp soft, your tooth must bite
    Ere reach the birdling.
Now, were there only crust to crunch, you 'd wince:
    Unpalatable!
Sage-leaf is bitter-pungent—so 's a quince:
    Eat each who 's able!
But through all three bite boldly—lo, the gust!
    Flavor—no fixture—
Flies permeating flesh and leaf and crust
    In fine admixture.
So with your meal, my poem: masticate
    Sense, sight, and song there!
Digest these, and I praise your peptics' state,
    Nothing found wrong there.
Whence springs my illustration who can tell?—
    The more surprising
That here eggs, milk, cheese, fruit suffice so well
    For gormandizing.
A fancy-freak by contrast born of thee,
    Delightful Gressoney!
Who laughest 'Take what is, trust what may be!'
    That 's Life's true lesson,—eh?"

57. *Polenta.* A pudding, made in Italy of corn-meal, like the New England "hasty pudding."

SCENE IV.—8. *Messina.* A large seaport town of Sicily. It has a very interesting cathedral and numerous other fine buildings. The climate is delightful, though hot in August, as the bishop here intimates.

9. *Assumption Day.* Assumption is a festival of the Church celebrated

on the 15th of August in honor of the miraculous ascent of the Virgin Mary into heaven. It rests upon a traditional account of the ascent first recorded by Gregory of Tours.

16. *Ascoli, Fermo, and Fossumbruno.* These towns are all in the so-called "Marches" of Central Italy. Ascoli is on the Tronto, and Fossombruno on the Metauro. They are all important ecclesiastical centres.

35. *Jules, a foreign sculptor.* Cf. scene ii. above.

42. *The very perfection.* Cf. *Andrea del Sarto* (called "The Faultless Painter"): *

> "Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,
> Or what 's a heaven for? All is silver-gray
> Placid and perfect with my art—the worse!"

50. *Correggio.* Antonio Allegri da Correggio (1494–1534) is admired by the world of artists chiefly for his beautiful frescoes in the church of San Giovanni and those on the dome of the cathedral at Parma; but the popular taste delights in his "Reading Magdalen," his "Notte" (Night), and the Gypsy Madonna or "Zingarella."

71. *Podere.* Italian for a farm or small landed property.

78. *I would better not.* The early eds. have the good old English form "had better," to which the poet has since taken a dislike. In a letter, dated Oct. 25, 1885, quoted by Mrs. Orr (p. 14, foot-note), he says: "As regards the slovenly *I had* for *I 'd*, instead of the proper *I would*, I shall not venture to supplement what Landor has magisterially spoken on the subject. An adverb adds to, and does not, by its omission, alter into nonsense the verb it qualifies. 'I would rather speak than be silent, better criticise than learn,' are forms structurally regular; what meaning is in 'I had speak, had criticise?'" This is essentially the familiar grammar-monger's objection to *had better, had rather, had as lief*, etc., that they "cannot be parsed"—which is true of many another well-established idiom, and merely shows that the "parsers" have something yet to learn. Browning apparently clings to the exploded notion that *I had better* had its origin in a blundering expansion of *I 'd better*, contracted from *I would better*. The fact is that *had better*, etc., were the *only* forms in use until the last century or so. They are the only ones in Shakespeare, Milton, and our English Bible. If one chooses to use the neologisms *would better*, etc., let him do so, but not turn up his hyper-syntactical nose at those who prefer the older forms.

80. *Forli.* A walled city of Italy, about forty miles to the southeast of Bologna.

82. *Cesena.* A small town about twelve miles from Forli. It has a cathedral and a Capuchin church.

101. *Soldo.* The Italian copper "penny," or ten-centesimi piece; in derivation as in value the equivalent of the French *sou*.

105. *Millet-cake.* A cake made of a small grain which grows in Italy, and is eaten only by the poorest classes.

110. *Poderi.* The plural of *podere.* The early eds. have "*poderes*."

126. *Mortal sin.* Deadly sin, or that which purgatory cannot remove.

176. *Begun operations already.* Cf. interlude ii. p. 134 above.

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* *Men and Women*, p. 184.

198. *The seven and one.* "The Seven Stars" is a popular synonym for the Pleiades, to which there is probably an allusion here. The *one* may be any "bright particular star" in the heavens.

208. *Miserere mei, Domine.* "Be merciful to me, O Lord."

EPILOGUE.—2. *Dray.* Nest; usually applied to that of the squirrel.

5. The *hedge-shrew* is a field-mouse. The *lob-worm* resembles an earth-worm, but is larger.

88. *Mavis, merle, and throstle.* The *mavis* (the English "song-thrush") and the *throstle* both belong to the thrush family. The *merle* (or *merl*) is the English blackbird.

91. *Howlet.* Another form of *owlet.* It is the spelling of the early eds. in *Macbeth*, iv. 1. 17: "Lizard's leg and howlet's wing"—the only instance of the word in Shakespeare.

92. *Chantry.* A private chapel, especially one endowed for the singing of special mass for the souls of the dead. Cf. *Henry V.* iv. 1. 318:

> "and I have built
> Two chantries, where the sad and solemn priests
> Sing still for Richard's soul."

94. *Full complines.* The compline is the last division of the Roman Catholic breviary, and it is often customary to recite it after sunset.

96. *Cowls and twats.* *Twats* is in no dictionary. We now have it from the poet (through Dr. Furnivall) that he got the word from the Royalist rhymes entitled "Vanity of Vanities," on Sir Harry Vane's picture. Vane is charged with being a Jesuit.

> "'Tis said they will give him a cardinal's hat:
> They sooner will give him an old nun's twat."

"The word struck me," says Browning, "as a distinctive part of a nun's attire that might fitly pair off with the cowl appropriated to a monk."

ADDENDA.

A FEW NOTES FROM MR. BROWNING.—Just as the book is going to press we receive a letter from Mr. Browning, dated July 10, 1886, which answers a few questions we ventured to send him through Dr. Furnivall.

In *Hervé Riel*, we could get no information about *Damfreville*, and were puzzled as to his relation to *Tourville*, who was admiral of the fleet. Mr. Browning says: "Damfreville commanded the squadron that escaped, and his was the big ship presenting the greatest difficulty."

In *The Bishop Orders his Tomb*, etc., our explanation of 95 (see p. 167 above) is confirmed by the poet thus: "In *St. Praxed*, the blunder as to 'the sermon' is the result of the dying man's haziness; he would not reveal himself as he does but for that."

In the *Two Camels*, our impression that there must be a misprint in the Hebrew of 95 (see p. 173) is also confirmed.* Mr. Browning says: "The 'yod' is omitted by the printer's fault, as is shown by the correct retention of the letter in the line a little above: it means 'from God.'"

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* The error will be corrected before printing the text. This should be borne in mind when reading the note on p. 173, which we leave as first written.

In *One Word More*, our question concerning the *Madonnas* referred to in 23 and 24 is answered thus: "The Madonna at Florence is that called 'del Granduca,' which represents her as 'appearing to a votary in a vision'—so say the describers: it is in the earlier manner, and very beautiful. I think I meant 'La Belle Jardinière'—but am not sure—for the picture in the Louvre."

"CHILDE ROLAND TO THE DARK TOWER CAME."—The following early readings in this poem should be noted:

52. For *O'er* the early eds. have "To."

65. *'Tis the Last Judgment's fire*, etc. "The Judgment's fire alone can cure this place."

79. *For aught I know.* "For all I know."

168. *Clearer case.* "Plainer case."

179. *Dotard, a-dozing.* "Fool, to be dozing."

A few verbal notes may also be added:

114. *Bespate.* Bespattered; a word not in the dictionaries, and probably coined by Browning.

130. *Pad.* Tread down; a provincialism.

135. *Mews.* Enclosure. *Mew* or *mews* was originally the place in which tame hawks were kept (probably because they were confined there while *mewing*, or moulting); and hence, metaphorically, any close place.

161. *Dragon-penned.* Dragon-feathered; not in the dictionaries.

177. *Crouched.* Macmillan's *Selections* has "Couched," which is probably a misprint.

203. *Slug-horn.* The word is not in Worc. or Wb.; and the only meaning given in the *Imp. Dict.* is "Slogan."

ALTERATIONS IN "PIPPA PASSES."—We have followed the text of the London ed. of 1878, which has the following variations from the earlier readings as given in the Boston reprint:

PROLOGUE.—83. *Whoever it was quenched*, etc. The early eds. omit *it was*.

203. *I will pass each.* Early eds. have "by" for *each*.

213, 214. *Nor yet cicala*, etc. The early reading was:

"As yet, nor cicale dared carouse—
Dared carouse!"

Cicale is the plural of *cicala*.

SCENE I.—32. *With a sun.* Originally, "With the sun."

54. *Here's the wine.* "Here is the wine."

82. *Proof were needed.* "Proof was needed."

126. *Return at eve.* "Returned at eve."

148. *Pretence to strike.* "Pretence to strike me."

149. *'Tis not the crime's.* "'T is not for the crime's."

158. *Look it down.* "Look it down, then."

168. *Who stammered.* "As he clung there—"

179. *When heaven's.* "When the heaven's."

[illegible] *Suffered descend.* "Seemed let descend."

222. *Call you out.* "You call out."
233. *Speak to me, not of me!* "Speak to me—speak not of me!"
245. *Show herself.* "And show herself."
265. *A hurry-down.* "A hurrying down."

INTERLUDE I.—37. *Came alone.* "Came singly."

SCENE II.—15. *The room.* "The chamber."
22. *Their truth.* "My truth."
63. *Our champion.* "Our champions'."
119. *Beside.* "Besides."
124. *Letting that.* "Letting it."
133. *Suffering borne.* "Or suffering borne."
138. *Not me the shame.* "Not so the shame."
141. *I love you, love.* "I love you, love you."
155. *Girls like me.* "Girls like us."
159. *The world.* "This world."
162. *But still Natalia.* "But no—Natalia."
163. *Though they smiled.* "While they smiled."
170. *Until at innermost.* "So that, at innermost."
178. *No—is not that.* "Stop—is not that."
187. *My lore.* "My love" (a misprint?).
197. *Deepest shadow.* "Shadow threefold."
202. *Then do you.* "So do you."
205. *Grew wise.* "Grew wiser."
207. *Once when.* "For once when."
220. *The nest, or the nook.* "The spot, or the spot."
221. *May surely.* "May the sureliest."
223. *The Love.* "Or the Love."
224. *In the Valley.* "In its Valley."
227. *When I love most.* "I love most when."
234. *To reach thy heart, nor prick.* "To wound thee, and not prick."
242. *The gold.* "This gold."
265. *Earth . . . sea.* "Earth's . . . sea's."
274. *Her memory stays.* "The peasants keep."
275. *And peasants sing how once a certain page.* "Her memory; and songs tell how many a page."
276. *Of her so far.* "Of one so far."
277. *Kate the queen.* "As a queen."
279. *Need him.* "For him."
289. *Psyche.* "Psyche's."
305. *Their laughter.* "That laughter."
318. *Meet Lutwyche, I.* "Shall I meet Lutwyche."
319. *Statue.* "Statue's."

SCENE III.—10. *That lean . . . look.* "Who lean . . . looking."
11. *Listen.* "Listening."
14. *Old Franz.* "Now hark."
30. *Visit night by night.* "Visit by night."
43. *Trouble.* "Trouble me."

the early eds. have

INDEX OF WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED.

FINIS.

From F. J. FURNIVALL, *Director of the New Shakspere Society, London.*

The merit I see in Mr. Rolfe's school editions of Shakspere's Plays over those most widely used in England is that Mr. Rolfe edits the plays as works of a poet, and not only as productions in Tudor English. Some editors think that all they have to do with a play is to state its source and explain its hard words and allusions; they treat it as they would a charter or a catalogue of household furniture, and then rest satisfied. But Mr. Rolfe, while clearing up all verbal difficulties as carefully as any Dryasdust, always adds the choicest extracts he can find, on the spirit and special "note" of each play, and on the leading characteristics of its chief personages. He does *not* leave the student without help in getting at Shakspere's chief attributes, his characterization and poetic power. And every practical teacher knows that while every boy can look out hard words in a lexicon for himself, not one in a score can, unhelped, catch points of and realize character, and feel and express the distinctive individuality of each play as a poetic creation.

From Prof. EDWARD DOWDEN, LL.D., *of the University of Dublin, Author of "Shakspere: His Mind and Art."*

I incline to think that no edition is likely to be so useful for school and home reading as yours. Your notes contain so much accurate instruction, with so little that is superfluous; you do not neglect the æsthetic study of the play; and in externals, paper, type, binding, etc., you make a book "pleasant to the eye" (as well as "to be desired to make one wise")—no small matter, I think, with young readers and with old.

From EDWIN A. ABBOTT, M.A., *Author of "Shakespearian Grammar."*

I have not seen any edition that compresses so much necessary information into so small a space, nor any that so completely avoids the common faults of commentaries on Shakespeare—needless repetition, superfluous explanation, and unscholar-like ignoring of difficulties.

F..m HIRAM CORSON, M.A., *Professor of Anglo-Saxon and English Literature, Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y.*

.. ..e way of annotated editions of separate plays of Shakespeare, for ... ...al purposes, I know of none quite up to Rolfe's.

From Prof. F. J. CHILD, *of Harvard University.*

I read your "Merchant of Venice" with my class, and found it in every respect an excellent edition. I do not agree with my friend White in the opinion that Shakespeare requires but few notes—that is, if he is to be thoroughly understood. Doubtless he may be enjoyed, and many a hard place slid over. Your notes give all the help a young student requires, and yet the reader for pleasure will easily get at just what he wants. You have indeed been conscientiously concise.

Under date of July 25, 1879, Prof. CHILD *adds:* Mr. Rolfe's editions of plays of Shakespeare are very valuable and convenient books, whether for a college class or for private study. I have used them with my students, and I welcome every addition that is made to the series. They show care, research, and good judgment, and are fully up to the time in scholarship. I fully agree with the opinion that experienced teachers have expressed of the excellence of these books.

From Rev. A. P. PEABODY, D.D., *Professor in Harvard University.*

I regard your own work as of the highest merit, while you have turned the labors of others to the best possible account. I want to have the higher classes of our schools introduced to Shakespeare chief of all, and then to other standard English authors; but this cannot be done to advantage unless under a teacher of equally rare gifts and abundant leisure, or through editions specially prepared for such use. I trust that you will have the requisite encouragement to proceed with a work so happily begun.

From the Examiner and Chronicle, N. Y.

We repeat what we have often said, that there is no edition of Shakespeare which seems to us preferable to Mr. Rolfe's. As mere specimens of the printer's and binder's art they are unexcelled, and their other merits are equally high. Mr. Rolfe, having learned by the practical experience of the class-room what aid the average student really needs in order to read Shakespeare intelligently, has put just that amount of aid into his notes, and no more. Having said what needs to be said, he stops there. It is a rare virtue in the editor of a classic, and we are proportionately grateful for it.

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